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TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

VISCOUNT ESHER





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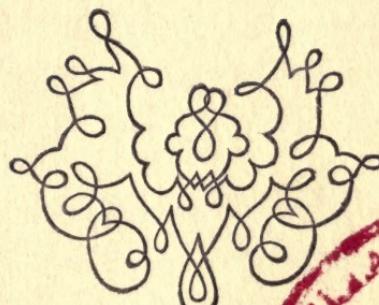
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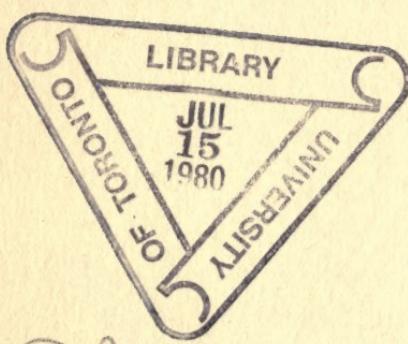
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LONDON
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PREFACE

THESE papers, several of merely fugitive interest, are reprinted with no idea that they will add to the sum of human knowledge.

It is pure vanity of authorship. They are gleaned from the work of many years, hastily performed amid the pressure of business. They seem to require this amount of apology.

It was impossible to correct grave errors of style, without completely rewriting whole passages; an amount of labour which did not appear to be warranted.

The lecture on Queen Victoria was delivered at the Royal Institution, and again at the Midland Institute, Birmingham.

As an attempt to comment upon the “Correspondence of the Queen,” it lacks, I hope not insight, but fulness of detail. As it stands it may serve to stimulate curiosity about the unpublished journals of the Queen’s early years; —curiosity which, by the gracious leave of His Majesty the King, may hereafter possibly be satisfied.

The essay on General Gordon is the last tribute I can pay to the memory of the heroic and gentle nature of him who was my friend.

I cannot pretend to agree with all the views expressed many years ago in the papers on Political and Imperial affairs. But I honestly believed every word of them when they were written, and I regret nothing which I have said.

The "Note" from the South African War Report has been added as an Appendix, because it serves to explain those views upon the gradual evolution of our Army from a Pretorian Guard into a Nation in Arms, which I have done my best to farther, and hope to live to see accomplished.

In the first of these Essays I ventured to suggest a reform in the antiquated and cumbrous financial procedure of the House of Commons. This suggestion when first published, elicited from Mr Gibson Bowles, a master of the subject, two or three private letters full of such sound criticism that I cannot frankly hold to the plan which I had proposed. To the critical passages I rigidly adhere, but I abandon the constructive proposal, leaving the remedy to more experienced hands.

I must thank the Editor of the *Nineteenth*

Century, who kindly gave me leave to reprint the papers which appeared in that magazine; and to my critical and sometimes hostile friend Mr Leo Maxse, I desire also to offer my best thanks for leave to print the first of these Essays and to appropriate the title of this volume.

February 1910.



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TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW, AND OTHER ESSAYS

I

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

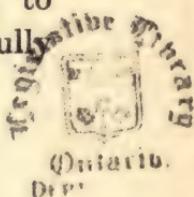
IN this land the secrets of national defence cannot be resolved in Cabinets or Committees and then be locked away in the breasts of naval or military officers, or even in those of statesmen. Although Americans might deny it and Frenchmen question it, Great Britain among the Great Powers of the world alone possesses a purely democratic form of government. Powers of sustained action and negation, such as are vested in the President or the Senate of the United States, have no place in our institutions. Our political atmosphere, thanks to the practice of Parliament and to the power of the Press, is more rarefied than that of France. So that no scheme of national defence, however well planned, however ingeniously devised, could be for long concealed from the prying eyes of those who, by speaking and writing, direct that

supreme authority with whom lies the responsibility for finding the practical means upon which all schemes of defence ultimately rest. This supreme authority is the enfranchised voter. Of this individual, well educated to-day, becoming better educated every day, all plans of defence, involving as they must moral and material sacrifice, are bound to have the approval, and to his reason they must appeal.

It is upon this appeal that the voluntary system, as opposed to military conscription, is in truth based. So long as the reasons, for which large demands of flesh and blood and brain as well as material wealth are made, can clearly be brought home to a nation so that the people voluntarily respond and yield freely what the safety of the nation demands, the voluntary system is secure. But the moment that the response is withheld, and that either the men or the money necessary for the preservation of the State are not forthcoming, all history shows that, sometimes happily before, but more commonly after, disaster, the voluntary system is abandoned. Some may think that too much publicity is given to reflections and discussions of national defence, but in a real Democracy—to use a colloquial phrase—openness of speech is the sole method of enabling the supreme authority, the nation itself, to reason and to conclude. A few years back, the salient historical deduction which

accounts for the change in the destinies of Portugal, Spain and Holland as World-Powers, and the circumstances attending the struggles between France and Great Britain for dominion oversea, were known only to a few. Now they are the commonplaces of the secondary schools.

Every young Briton realises, or should realise, the conditions under which this country lost an Empire and built up another, and he has been stimulated to consider for himself the conditions upon which this new and world-wide Empire can hold together. He knows that a century ago our grandfathers were locked in a deadly struggle with what is now a friendly people, for the possession of the vacant lands over which our people were destined to flow, thus opening up avenues of escape for his forbears, unimagined wealth for men and women of British blood, and creating markets for the manufactured goods upon which and upon which alone the material prosperity of this country finally depends. He sees clearly that a similar struggle may recur and that some other nation, now friendly, may be impelled, by forces too strong to be restrained, to wrest from us the commercial and Imperial dominion so hardly won. It follows that he should desire to be assured, and to assure himself, that sound and effective preparation has been made to meet a danger which our forefathers successfully



combated, and which we or our children may have again to face. No perfectly sane man ventures to question to-day the proposition that the Imperial safety and commercial prosperity of an island race such as ours are determined by command of the sea.

This doctrine is our sole legacy from the Great Rebellion. From the time of the Commonwealth, we are told by the most suggestive of historical teachers, England's maxim was that she is not a military State, that she ought to have no army, or the smallest possible, but that her navy ought to be the strongest in the world. If Cromwell's Navigation Act laid the foundations of our commercial supremacy, the maritime power organised by Vane and wielded by Blake was the beginning of that sea-command which we have never so far relinquished. A century later, when the war broke out with Spain, the navy of England was equal to the combined navies of France and Spain, and the "two-Power standard" at sea had been unconsciously established by statesmen whose policy of land war was confined to subsidies and alliances. If in the three wars between 1740-83 and in the Napoleonic wars which closed in 1814 the struggle with France for our commercial rights was decided in our favour, it was due to the prudence and courage of the ruling classes of Englishmen in those days, who never shrank

from the sacrifices which naval supremacy entails.

The luminous American protagonist of the doctrine of Sea-power, writing twenty years ago, expressed grave doubt whether the Sea-power of Great Britain may not suffer from the passing of supreme authority into the hands of the "people at large." Although its broad basis still remains in a great trade, large mechanical industries and an extensive colonial system, he thought it doubtful whether a democratic government would have the foresight, the keen sensitiveness to national position and credit, the willingness to ensure prosperity by adequate expenditure in peace, and he believed that he already saw signs of England tending to drop behind.

But the story of the past two decades shows him to have been mistaken, for perhaps at no time in all our history has greater keenness been displayed in Parliament and in the Press on naval questions, and during that period the annual charge for the fleets has almost doubled. During this period, however, a material change has occurred in the balance of naval power both in the eastern and western hemispheres. Twenty years ago, in the 'eighties, France appeared to be the only rival to Great Britain at Sea, and the centre of gravity of maritime power in Europe was still sought for in the

Mediterranean. To-day it has shifted to the North Sea, while in the Pacific the naval power of England has yielded to the United States on the western littoral and to Japan in the Far East. Even ten years ago, on the eve of the South African War, the flag of England flew supreme over the oceans and seas of the world. To-day we have been forced to abandon our supremacy over the great waterway which separates Canada as well as the United States from the Far East.

Although we may flatter ourselves with the pleasing thought that this abandonment is due to the Japanese Alliance on the one hand, and our blood relation to the United States on the other, it is due, in point of fact, to the rise of German sea-power. The centre of gravity of maritime power, owing partly to the weakness of the French and mainly to the enormous growth of the German fleet, has shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. So rapid has been the acquisition of naval strength by Germany, and so formidable are her fleets in being and in preparation, that she has forced upon England a concentration which has thrown the control of the Pacific into other hands. Concurrently with this development of sea-power, Germany has shown a determination to compete with Great Britain for the carrying trade of the world. Her mercantile marine,

both in efficiency, in attractiveness, and in freight charges, has become a serious rival to ours. The trade-routes of the world are covered with German shipping, and into every nook and corner of the civilised and half-civilised world German goods rapidly and surely are pushing their way.

For two centuries we disputed with Spain, Holland, and France for the sea-borne commerce of the world. We are now face to face with another rival, more formidable in determination, in skill, and in commercial intelligence than they. This rivalry may prove to be of a friendly character, but on one condition only, that condition being that we retain the undisputed command of the sea-approaches to our shores. Holland, wrote the greatest of Dutch statesmen, will never in time of peace take resolutions strong enough to lead to pecuniary sacrifices beforehand. "The character of the Dutch is such that, unless danger stares them in the face, they are indisposed to lay out money for their own defence. I have to do with a people who, liberal to profusion when they ought to economise, are often sparing to avarice when they ought to spend." If an English statesman has ever to make a similar confession, our island people will only on sufferance continue to be free.

Across the North Sea lies a nation already



sixty millions strong, with the most highly trained and formidable army ever known in history, a nation highly educated, unspoilt as yet by luxury, proud of its achievements, ambitious for its future and dependent for its further development upon finding outlets for a population growing and confined, and upon creating markets for its manufactures. A German statesman, or publicist, or merchant, looking abroad and ahead, sees in the immediate foreground —while Russia lies still in half-awakened torpor —the rivalry of England. Is there any Englishman who, in their place, would not feel the same? This is not the language of fear or dislike or of unreasoning jealousy. The Germans are a proud people struggling for commercial development and determined to achieve their purpose. Like other commercial rivalry, the rivalry of nations requires a victim. They look to themselves and we have to look to ourselves. If we take advantage of our insular position, of our vast maritime seaboard, of our splendid maritime population, and of the incomparable uses which could be made of Greater Britain oversea, the position of England is commercially secure, and we need have no fear of Germany. The struggle with her will end as the struggle with Spain, with Holland and with France ended a century ago. But if the “people at large” prove to be faint-hearted in peace, like

the countrymen of the great De Witt, the British Empire will share the fate of the Dutch, although England could hardly hope for that degree of immunity from absorption which so far Holland enjoys.

If, then, it is recognised that command of the European seas is an inflexible condition of our national security—for it now appears to be useless to attach this condition to the Far Eastern ocean—how is this command to be maintained. The “two-Power standard” is a good phrase, but it is by no means easy to define and exemplify in *matériel* and in *personnel*, in ships and guns and men. It is far easier, far clearer, and infinitely more safe to adopt the simpler standard, and, avoiding “paper programmes,” for every ship which our great rival builds, to build two of equal strength. Let Germany force the pace, but let England win the race. That is a pregnant phrase and a plain policy, which every member of the British electorate can understand. Of any sound scheme of national or Imperial defence, naval supremacy based upon the simple proposition of two to one is the vital essence.

Under modern conditions, situated as England is to-day, with her vast population dependent upon sea-borne supplies of food and raw material, with her solvency and existence bound up with her export and import trade, and the

ocean-way her sole communication between Britons oversea, no supremacy based upon a lower standard of fleet-power than double that of her most powerful competitor can render her secure. As sea-power is distributed to-day, and so far as its distribution can be foreseen, this standard will give us in reality a two-Power standard—excepting always the United States—of so unmistakable a kind that no illusion either in our own minds or in the minds of others is possible. Thus far the majority of those who have given much attention to questions of defence are probably agreed. But the moment attention is directed to the condition of the fleet at any specific time, or its natural growth and expansion, wide divergence of opinion manifests itself. Some high authorities hold that the British fleet to-day is not only twice but four times as powerful as that of Imperial Germany. Other high authorities never tire of stating that the game is half lost, and that in the month of January 1912 we shall have parted with the command of the sea. The question therefore above all other questions vital to the electorate and to every British man and woman, whether resident in these islands or beyond them, is—whether the present Board of Admiralty, or any Board of Admiralty which may succeed it, fulfils the primary duty of its existence; that primary

duty being to ensure supremacy at sea not only to-day, and not only to-morrow, but on the day after to-morrow. Naval supremacy cannot be extemporised. It must be forecast and carefully prepared.

Up to comparatively recent times, until, in short, the methods by which the German Empire was evolved from the kingdom of Prussia were recognised in this country, but little account was taken by statesmen or even by professional sea and military officers of what has been called peace strategy. Even the Boer War found the nation wholly unprepared with any carefully considered plan to meet a contingency in which we might have had to carry on military operations against the United Dutch of South Africa, while threatened or attacked elsewhere by sea and land. Had any Great Power, or combination of Great Powers, intervened in March 1900, there can be little doubt that such intervention would have been resisted, and the army in South Africa cut off from reinforcement and supply until the command of the sea had been secured. That the defence of these islands and the maintenance of our Imperial position require a Fleet of preponderating strength is a proposition which for more than twenty years seems to have been realised by the nation, but what the people of this country never appear to grasp is that

national policy and national armament must keep in tune. At one moment they press for a lower scale of expenditure and for large reductions in the cost of the army and the navy. The next, they insist upon political or philanthropic action, which may land them in war with a nation which counts its armed men, not by thousands, but by millions.

The maxim of the Commonwealth, that England was not a military State, that she ought to have no army, or the smallest possible, but that her navy ought to be the strongest in the world, was sound enough in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when her responsibilities and aims were wholly different. To-day by England we do not mean these islands in the western sea, but an England which is spread over the whole surface of the world. Our people, therefore, must inevitably decide, and the decision cannot be safely postponed, whether they mean to remain one nation, although broken up into different States, and whether they mean, both as States and as individuals, to take their full share of all the burdens of national defence. Australians have already shown signs that they recognise the obligation and are not unready to meet it. But our own people, the forty millions inhabiting these islands, with older traditions and wider experience, and greater responsibilities and more

perilously situated, should surely take the lead.

That any period of peace can be prolonged is an idle dream. Thirteen years ago the cost of the navy was little over twenty-one and a half millions, and of the army twenty-one millions. Since then we have conquered the Soudan, undertaken vast responsibilities in Egypt, and employed nearly half a million of soldiers in South Africa in a war which lasted three years. To-day the cost of the navy is thirty millions, and that of the army twenty-eight millions. At what then will these figures stand five years hence, or even next year? Who can tell? And who is presumptuous enough to say that within that period we may not be engaged in a conflict beyond these shores, and involved in a war not strictly localised, and with our communications not absolutely safe? The fundamental truth of national strategy may be laid down by the Defence Committee, and accepted by the Executive Government of the day, and endorsed by Parliament and by the people. This was the case with the principles of what was called the "Stanhope Minute," dated 8th December 1888. But nothing happened, and in 1899 the nation's power of defence and offence was much what it was ten years before.

The Royal Commission on the War in South Africa held their last sitting on 10th June 1903.

The report was issued in August of that year, and it is true that some very distinct results were achieved, and few soldiers would deny that the Regular Army is better prepared, as regards staff, training, and *matériel*, than it was at the outbreak of the Boer War. A genuine attempt has been made to reorganise the Volunteer forces, and an attempt based on sound principles of war. But there is much the same doubt experienced, and much the same critical attitude adopted towards the fitness of the military forces to fulfil their functions at home and abroad as towards the Navy.

Parliament votes, year after year, huge sums for armaments, and nearly sixty millions of taxes are collected from the people of these islands to pay for the militant services of the nation. Yet it cannot be said that the highest naval and military authorities ever express themselves satisfied that Great Britain possesses either a Fleet or an Army at all adequate to or efficient for her requirements. Curiously enough, the House of Commons, which has to vote these enormous sums, takes great trouble—by means of a Standing Committee—to see that every penny is applied to the service for which it is voted. This committee overhauls accounts, calls witnesses, who are examined and cross-examined, and in short possesses very wide powers, which it exercises thoroughly with excellent results.

But there is no Standing Committee to enquire whether the money voted is spent to the best advantage. There are discussions upon the Navy and Army Estimates in the House itself, and, year after year, the country watches, with sad amusement, painstaking and conscientious Members of Parliament striving for information, being fenced with by Ministers who are wrung with anxiety to preserve proper official reserve and the consequent respect of their Departments. It is not worth while even for the Mother of Parliaments to examine a custom which has grown up in France, under which the Estimates for the Navy and the Army are submitted to committees representing all sections of the Chamber, with wide powers of examination, extended in some cases to visual tests, and with instructions to report the result of their labours to the Chamber itself? In spite of certain well-known scandals in administration, the French people have the satisfaction of knowing that to the enquiries and labours of one of these committees was not long ago due the completion of the armaments of the frontier fortresses and their provisioning with munitions of war. The educational value of these committees is inestimable, bringing as they do Members of Parliament of all shades of opinion, many of whom are misinformed and some of whom are hostile to all forms of expenditure



on armaments, into contact with *personnel* and *materiel*, which for the first time they begin to realise and to understand.

If the thesis upon which this argument is based is a reasonable one, and if the enfranchised voter is the supreme authority, who eventually has to decide whether Great Britain is to retain command of the sea, and whether armed forces are a necessity of empire, surely there is much to be said for allowing him, through his elected representative, to come face to face with the highest expert opinion, and to ascertain for himself whether the supremacy of the Navy and the efficiency of the Army are shams or realities. The writer of these pages was for many years a Member of the House of Commons, and for many years the head of one of the State Departments. He has served on Royal Commissions and committees, and has had a somewhat varied experience of government. He can affirm, therefore, with a certain degree of knowledge, that no more formidable and efficient piece of machinery exists within the constitution for ascertaining the truth than the Standing Committee of the House of Commons which goes by the name of the Committee of Public Accounts. If Parliament is satisfied that we must look to the Fleet to provide the first, second and third lines of national defence, and if Parliament is in earnest

in declaring that no money shall be spared in order to secure the supremacy of Great Britain at sea, should not Parliament itself take care that these intentions are made good? If it is a function of Parliament to audit expenditure upon which national credit is based, is it not equally its duty to audit the fleet upon which our national existence depends? Although the Navy is the vital interest, and although the peril of the naval position during the next few years can hardly be exaggerated, and demands the untiring examination and care of Parliament, it is obvious that the same chain of reasoning applies to the land forces of the Crown.

If, then, the younger and more ardent Parliamentary spirits, to whose hands the nation seems inclined to trust its destinies, will free themselves from tradition and prejudice, they may obtain, by certain changes in the procedure of the House of Commons, results far more valuable to this country than they are likely to secure by any reform of the House of Lords.

II

THE DYNAMIC QUALITY OF A TERRITORIAL FORCE

I HAVE tried to say elsewhere that for a nation like ours, which is not confined to a few islands in the Western seas, but stretches over the surface of the world, the idea of a prolonged peace is an idle dream.

On 10th June 1903 the Commission appointed to enquire into the war in South Africa sat for the last time.

“That war”—wrote Sir George Taubman Goldie, in his Note on the Report—“produced the most perilous international situation in which the Empire has found itself since the days of Napoleon;” and when those words were written he little knew the very real and tremendous peril from foreign intervention which had threatened us. Every one knows now.

“Only an extraordinary combination of fortunate circumstances, external and internal”—he went on to say—“saved the Empire

during the early months of 1900, and there is no reason to expect a repetition of such fortune, if, as appears probable, the next national emergency finds us still discussing our preparations."

Evidently in Sir George Goldie's mind was running the remembrance of Prussian statesmen and soldiers in 1806 still discussing what new piece of patchwork they should put into the antiquated military organisation of the Great Frederick, when Napoleon swept over them at Jena, and Prussia disappeared.

The document to which I allude was one of two Notes appended to the Report of Lord Elgin's Commission.

The first Note recommended certain definite changes in War Office administration, the creation of an Army Council, the abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief, and the appointment of an Inspector-General of the Forces.

On 17th November, in the same year, a Special Committee was constituted and appointed practically to carry out these recommendations.

Before the month of May 1904 the necessary changes were initiated, and they were shortly afterwards completed.

In consequence of these changes a General Staff—a plant of slow growth—has become a reality, and it has been followed by a thorough

reorganisation of the Army into two lines, completed by the well-known Act of 1907.

The second Note, which I venture to think was of no less value, but which has remained a dead letter, dealt directly with what in the body of the Report the Commissioners declared was the "true lesson of the war." This, in their opinion, was "that no military system will be satisfactory which does not contain powers of expansion outside the limit of the regular forces of the Crown, whatever that limit may be."

Sir George Goldie pushed this doctrine to a conclusion. "Every physically sound boy," he wrote, "of seventeen years of age, not serving in the Navy or the Merchant Service, and unprovided with a certificate (from the appointed military authority) that he is an efficient member of a Volunteer Cadet Corps, would have to serve for a term in National Cadet Schools—officered, as are Woolwich and Sandhurst, by officers of the Regular Army."

Two of his colleagues, Sir Frederick Darley and Sir John Edge, added a Note stating their agreement with Sir George Goldie's "suggestion that every boy not disqualified by infirmity should be compelled to undergo a course of military training." And I added an expression of opinion to the effect that with Sir George Taubman Goldie's scheme, as explained by him, for National Military Education I cordially

agreed, as the only practical alternative to Conscription.

There was no mistake about the intentions of the Commissioners. The whole body signed the Report, which declared the "true lesson" of the war to be a want of military expansion outside the limit of the Regular Army, but did not pronounce definitely how this defect was to be remedied.

Sir George Goldie suggested, in unmistakable terms, and three of his colleagues cordially agreed with him, that a remedy was to be found in universal compulsory training of a military character for boys of seventeen, for a term of six, eight, or ten months, unless they had been previously trained at school.

I can say with certitude, that neither Sir George Goldie nor any of us were thinking of England as an island group, but we had always constantly before us Britain and Greater Britain oversea, with all her political and commercial risks, in our minds, and this recommendation was not insular but Imperial. It was a suggestion made at the end of a prolonged enquiry upon which infinite care and labour were bestowed, and it was made with the full responsibility not of individual opinion, but of collective judgment.

Years have passed. A scheme intended to give expansion to the military forces of the

Crown was tentatively put forward by one Secretary of State for War, but received no support from his colleagues or from the public, and proved abortive.

Then another Secretary of State succeeded in obtaining the assent of Parliament to a complete reconstruction of our Army organisation.

It is much to have achieved, that the Regular Army should have a fixed War organisation, not on paper, but in actual brigades and divisions.

It is a still greater achievement to have converted the Militia from a force which could only be used for service at home, except by consent of the men, into a force which can be used for purposes of draft or reinforcement abroad in time of war, thus for purposes of war adding 70,000 men to the Regular Army.

This additional force—the Special Reserve—enables the Regular Army to be mobilised, and provides for six months' wastage of war. To that extent we are stronger than ever we have been before.

Mr Haldane's final achievement, so far, has been to provide, as regards organisation, command, and staff, fourteen territorial divisions and fourteen yeomanry brigades, with artillery and transport, enlisted for service at home, and automatically to be embodied when the

Reserves of the Regular Army are called out by Proclamation.

If Mr Haldane's plan proves completely successful, we shall have within these islands—apart from the garrisons of India, Egypt, and the Colonies :—

1. Six divisions of Regular Infantry with a proportional amount of Artillery and other arms, and four Cavalry Brigades.

2. A not inadequate reserve of Regulars, and in addition a Special Reserve of half-trained men, liable to instant embodiment and for use abroad on the outbreak of war, who are calculated to be sufficient to keep those six divisions supplied in the field for six months.

3. We shall also have fourteen divisions of Territorial Troops and fourteen Yeomanry Brigades.

In the creation of this Territorial Force, the present Secretary of State has contrived deeply to interest his fellow-countrymen. The response to the appeal made by His Majesty the King to his Lieutenants of Counties has been indeed remarkable.

All over the country men of high position have thrown themselves with patriotic energy into the movement, and their example has been followed by persons of all classes.

For the moment, in spite of strong views held privately by many that the principle of

compulsion should be adopted in the interests both of military efficiency and national moral tone, the voluntary system holds the field.

It is of no use at present to shut our eyes to this salient fact. Every practical patriot will therefore, naturally, do his best to carry out the will of his country in its present mood, and be ready to sink his personal predilections for the public good.

The salient fact, which is in itself enough to inspire enthusiasm, is that for the first time since the Napoleonic scare of 1805 a definite and clear rôle has been assigned to the Volunteer or Territorial Forces of the Crown.

The Executive Government, through the mouth of the Secretary of State for War, have explained that, although Great Britain relies upon the Fleet for the protection of these shores, yet, in order that the Fleet may securely carry out this paramount and vital mission, a mobile Territorial Force of a certain strength is a necessity.

It is not important to argue or explain this proposition. It may be accepted as the basis and the justification of the great effort which is being made to create fourteen divisions and fourteen mounted brigades of Territorial Troops.

It is an invigorating and inspiring thesis.

Every man who enlists into the Territorial Force may feel that when he voluntarily under-

takes the obligations which the Act of 1907 imposes, and sacrifices time and often money for the sake of his country's safety, he is not taking upon himself a fictitious, but a grave and serious duty.

He is no longer an amateur, "playing at soldiers," but he is a citizen soldier, coming forward as a free man to bear responsibilities which others are shirking.

This is the spirit in which the men of old esteemed it a privilege rather than a duty to be permitted to serve in the ranks of the Roman Republic.

It is the noblest sacrifice which young men to-day who cannot afford to be professional soldiers can make of their leisure.

Sport and games, excellent things in themselves—hunting, shooting, football, and golf—are subsidiary means of sustaining the manhood of our people. Indirectly they contribute to our defensive force by raising national physical standards. But they are largely the pastimes of the idle and the rich, of men and women who, incapable of sustained patriotic effort, are content to enjoy the fruits of other men's labour, and to rely for their security upon the length of their purse, or the self-sacrifice of their neighbours.

This, however, is a digression.

There is another use to which a mobile Territorial Force can conceivably be put.



I have never been able to see why it should not voluntarily meet the difficulty and supply the want of "expansion" upon which the Elgin Commission laid such profound stress.

The Militia of old was a force in many respects resembling the Territorial Force of to-day, and very gallantly, over and over again, the Militia responded to the demand of its officers and of the country.

The ideal Territorial Force is to be composed of young men, untrammelled by family ties and not too heavy of foot, of men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, who have not lost the elasticity and freedom of youth, and who are keen (as young men usually are) for excitement and for the fray.

This is a force altogether dissimilar from the Volunteers.

Why then not take advantage of the enthusiasms and fine courage of youth?

Why should not the Territorial units volunteer, as units, for Foreign Service. They would not be likely to be wanted, nor indeed could they be used, except in a war in which the sea-command was so well assured that invasion or raid risks were negligible.

I am not here speaking of the "Special Reserve," or of attempting to obtain by any method in peace time a promise of service in the field outside these islands.

I am speaking of permission and encouragement in time of severe stress being given to units of the Territorial Force to volunteer for foreign service as complete units.

Not only combatant, but auxiliary troops; not only infantry, cavalry, and artillery, but transport and supply columns and Army Medical Corps.

It may be said, "What is the good of half-trained troops?"

The answer is, that if Militia were good enough for garrison duty, for lines of communication, and finally to send to South Africa, the Territorials are better.

In view of the superior quality of the men of which the force is composed this answer is complete.

Less than ten years ago, with great difficulty, forces with no training at all had to be rapidly improvised and sent to the assistance of the Regular Army, in a war against a small nation of farmers.

What would happen if such improvised and quite untrained levies had to face within the confines of the Empire the highly-trained troops of some great European power?

The Regular Army is no doubt very efficient, but it is very small, and can never be other than very small. Nothing could be more futile, in view of our vast responsibilities elsewhere, than

to rely upon our Regular Army as a second line of Home Defence, or as the sole unsupported line of defence for our Empire oversea.

Experience has taught us that expansion of this Regular Army may become, at any time, a necessity under the conditions of modern war, even against a small State; and the reasoned opinion of men who have had special opportunities of studying the problem, is that expansion of the Regular Army in the event of any serious war, for the defence of our possessions oversea, may be a condition possibly of our continued existence as a nation.

Glancing abroad we see, for the first time since 1814, a Great Power in Europe menacing, though friendly at the present time, that commercial and maritime supremacy which Great Britain has slowly built up since the seventeenth century.

National security cannot be purchased by alliances or "ententes," but only by self-reliance and adequate preparation.

We all of us know that, if we are to be secure, we shall be forced in the years to come to build two ships for every keel laid down by the greatest European naval Power, whichever that Power may be.

But our place in the world cannot be maintained by sea-power alone, and for home defence and "imperial defence" our people must prepare themselves to fight ashore.

From oversea, Englishmen living under the Union Jack, speaking our language—just as closely knit to all of us at home, for purposes of unity and self-defence, as any German living in Munich is knit to any German living in Berlin—may stretch out a hand and ask for assistance.

What response shall we be in a position to make ?

From India, from Canada, from Australia, from Africa, at any hour the cry may come.

Are we ready ? If not, when shall we be ready ?

The nation has decided, through its representatives and the Ministers they have chosen, to give Mr Haldane's plan a trial.

It is surely the last trial likely to be made of the purely voluntary system—a system, nevertheless, so interwoven with our national ideas and habits, that even its total breakdown would certainly not be followed by “compulsion” in its most effective form.

It is a real but not recognised danger, that if Mr Haldane's plan fails we may get in its place a system of compulsion which from its half-and-half character is bound gravely to affect the number and quality of the *personnel* of the Navy and Regular Army, and may thus leave us worse off in armed strength than we are now.

It must never be forgotten, however, that, although we may be forced into compulsion by

the slackening of the voluntary spirit throughout the country, there are no signs that the British people have changed their ingrained habits.

The English Constitution, as every one knows, is based upon compromise, so dearly cherished by the British temperament. We have always wished to eat our cake and have it, to enjoy the best of both worlds ; and we have, in politics, managed fairly well to achieve this Utopian ideal, by calling ourselves a "democracy," and by adhering to most of the methods and prejudices of an "aristocracy."

We are the least "democratic" of nations in practical everyday life, yet we pride ourselves upon having the most soundly "democratic" political institutions in the world.

The basis of what is called "democracy," however, is not only equality of status, but equality of sacrifice. And yet all through our political system there runs a maximum of unequal demand for self-abnegation on behalf of the public and of the State.

So long as this demand is met by men and women who give time and money of their own free will to the State, there is no "democracy" in its true sense.

The voluntary principle, whether it takes the form of unpaid services to or financial support of schools, hospitals, magistracy, representation on local or imperial bodies, county associations, or

Territorial troops, is anti-democratic, and the men and women who render such services are paying not only their own share, but the shares of others, towards the support of the country and the Empire.

Inequality of sacrifice is supposed to bring gratitude and honour in its train.

When we think of "voluntary service" in the Territorial Force, it must be remembered that gratitude is due not only to the man who comes forward and gives up his time to drill and discipline which he might be spending in amusement or study.

The sacrifice cuts deeper ; and relatives, perhaps deprived of a seaside holiday because the father or brother is in "camp" during the annual holiday, are paying their share.

And what about the employer ?

If he puts obstacles in the way of camp, he is thought to be "unpatriotic."

In reality he is nothing of the kind. He is merely a negative sort of person, like everybody else.

It is the employer who permits his people to go to camp, and who is willing to sacrifice unearned wages and give an increase of holiday, who is the active patriot whose name should be written in gold letters on the country's roll of honour.

We are, as a nation, fond of statistics and



memorials. The logical sequence of the voluntary system would be to publish annually a "Roll of Honour" containing the names of those who give service free on behalf of the "idle rich" and the "irresponsible poor."

In the county of London we propose to make a start in this direction. The great employers of labour have been personally approached, with the help of the Trade Societies, and asked to specify the numbers of men they can spare annually for camp.

It is being arranged that local recruiting committees, with the assistance of officers commanding units, shall endeavour to recruit up to these numbers, and no further, from the patriotic firms who thus give their countenance and help to the London force.

Then the smaller employer will be approached, and shortly it is hoped that this section of the "Roll of Honour" can be published, as an example to all.

Recruiting, on a plan of this kind, may possibly produce the total number of men required, since it tends to widen knowledge of the conditions of Territorial service and local interest in the scheme of National Defence, and, in any case, it has the merit of obtaining as recruits men who are not hampered by restriction, and who are free to attend the annual camp, which from the military standpoint is the criterion of efficiency.

So far, in our country, "compulsion" has been tried only in relation to boys and girls.

It has never yet been tried upon grown men and women. But if freedom of the kind with which we are familiar is to be maintained as part of our political system, it can only be—in relation to the standards of other nations—by organising the voluntary system in such a way as to give results equal if not superior to those obtained under "compulsion."

This should not be beyond the reach of the practical genius of our race.

Under existing circumstances, in the present state of the balance of world-power, and with our Fleet maintained at the standard laid down by universal consent, the country has been told that a Territorial Force of a certain strength is necessary for the adequate defence of these shores.

This force may have wider potential uses. It is sought to obtain it under a voluntary system which is congenial to the habits of the nation.

But it has to be obtained.

And there must be a term within which it should be complete up to the establishment laid down by the General Staff of the Army. Fortunately, there are manifold signs that the people will respond to the appeal of their Sovereign and of Parliament.

If they fail to do so, and if the careful enquiries

and conclusions upon which this scientific organisation for Home Defence has been based are believed to be sound, there can only be one alternative, however hateful it may appear to the majority of our fellow-countrymen.

III

A PROBLEM IN MILITARY EDUCATION.

THE truth about the Navy was told twenty-four years ago with excellent results, but the truth about the Army has not been told.

The Army has never been popular in England, and this fact, dating from times when a standing Army was thought to menace public liberty, has been one of the main obstacles to sound military organisation. The people of this country have never taken a whole-hearted interest in the military forces of the Crown, with the result that sometimes jobbers and sometimes faddists have had the Army at their mercy. Any one who has been present, in a seaport town, at the reception of a ship of war, and in a garrison town, when a new battalion takes up its quarters, will have noticed the difference in the welcome accorded by the citizens.

Long before Captain Mahan began to write, the English people had instinctively realised that their security, as a nation, rested upon the

invincibility of the British Fleet. The Navy was always the popular Service, and naval heroes the darlings of the nation. Soldiers were looked upon as mercenaries, who had to be tolerated, and the Army as a sort of Royal whim, that might easily become a popular danger, unless carefully watched.

On the stage and in books, the sailor came to be represented as everything that was gallant and debonair, while the Army was generally typified by a somnolent and peculiarly heavy dragoon. Even the superb Marlborough was travestied, without remonstrance, by prejudiced historians, and the Duke of Wellington, in spite of unparalleled service, was mobbed and the windows of Apsley House were stoned and broken.

It is true that the Household Troops, both Cavalry and Infantry, thanks to their fine uniforms and exemplary conduct, have been popular in the Metropolis, just as a few Scottish regiments have roused enthusiasm in the stolid hearts north of the Tweed; but the great mass of Cavalry and Infantry of the Line, which have grizzled in the tropics, and lead dismal lives in out-of-the-way stations all over the world, have until quite recent times borne the burden of Empire unwept and unsung.

The result has been that the English people have always readily listened to detraction, but

have wearied quickly of reasoned criticism in everything that concerns the Army.

They have rarely got beyond the total of the Estimates. If these were at a reasonable figure, efficiency was a matter of indifference. The nation was not unwilling to pay, provided that they were not worried with details, and that a fairly decent show could occasionally be given on Laffan's Plain for the benefit of a foreign potentate.

Luckily for the nation, the Army Estimates rose to £30,000,000 per annum, and the British people at last awakened sufficiently to enable a minister to ask and endeavour to answer two questions, upon which any sound organisation of the Army must necessarily depend.

The necessity to obtain an answer to these vital questions, preluded the advent of the Defence Committee, and at last some consideration has been given to the double problem—(a) the purposes for which the Army is maintained, and (b) the composition and size of the Force required.

I

“The purposes for which an Army is maintained” was defined, on the authority of the Defence Committee, by Mr Balfour in the House of Commons; and the principal functions

of that Committee, are from time to time, as conditions change, to reconsider the basis upon which a Military Force must always rest. In the past, the Executive Government of the day has been too much occupied with politics and immediate questions of administration, to give time to the consideration of problems, which, in relative importance, are nevertheless vital to good and sound government. The Defence Committee supplies the Prime Minister for the time being with the machinery required; that is to say, with a bureau of a more or less permanent character, whose primary function is to collect information and formulate ideas, enabling the Cabinet to deal with the all-important question of the Peace Strategy of the Empire.

Every variation in the balance of World-power, every acre added to the dominions of King Edward, and every change, either by treaty or understanding with a Great Foreign Power, alters the conditions and purposes for which an Army is required. That these alterations should be constantly and scientifically studied, was one of the main objects for which the Imperial Defence Committee was constituted, and for which it is retained in its present shape.

II

The "Composition of the Army" is a factor constantly forgotten by writers and speakers and by the public, when indulging both in criticism and suggestion upon military affairs.

The Army is composed of Volunteers, whether troops are called Regular or Territorial; the voluntary principle of enlistment lies at the root of the matter.

This condition has been imposed and is still imposed, and apparently is likely to be imposed, by the will of the nation.

Yet there are critics and writers who constantly forget this obvious circumstance, and continually fail to see that under a voluntary system the treatment of military questions, and the treatment of officers and men, must be wholly different from what would be possible under a compulsory system.

Under a compulsory system the highest efficiency can be obtained by methods extremely vigorous and simple. As is often said in another connection, it is easy to govern by the sword. But under a voluntary system, every step is surrounded by difficulties. Tact is required, and discernment, a light hand, and not too tight a rein, the arts of cajolery, a reasonable emolument,

suitable and fair rewards, justice in selection and rejection, every consideration to the weakness and failings of young manhood, all tempered by firm and gentle discipline, if officers and men are, in the first place, to be obtained for the Army, and in the second place, to be retained in the Army.

Efficiency is not the sole consideration, for we have got to get our raw material before it is possible to convert it into the product required.

It is easy to gibe at the War Office, and to belittle the value of the Army. The War Office, under present circumstances, whatever it may have been in the past, is nothing more or less than a body of selected soldiers, sufficiently old to have experience, and sufficiently young to possess professional sympathy, to whose hands the administration of the Army has been entrusted.

The executive command of the Army rests, under the King, with those highly gifted officers who would—in the event of war—lead men to battle.

Although this system has been working for only a short time, excellent results have been obtained.

The Field Army is more highly trained, and better organised than ever before in the history of the nation.

This much is admitted by so great and so unbiassed a judge as Lord Roberts.

Of course much remains to be done before the "Administration" of the Army is up to the high standard to which that of the Navy has been brought; but considering the natural gifts for administration peculiarly characteristic of soldiers, as may be seen, for example, by reference to Lord Cromer's reports on Egypt, there is every hope that the time is not distant when the War Office will cease to be the favourite "Aunt-Sally" and cock-shy of the Press and of the public. If this is to be the case, our soldier administrators must realise that they too are bound by the conditions imposed upon them by the nation; and that it is not their business to try by circuitous methods to impose other conditions upon the people of the country; but to work loyally the system, as they find it, to the highest possible point of efficiency.

That point may be a degree lower than the possible efficiency, but it is settled by the condition precedent of the problem which they have to solve. Two examples will suffice.

In a country where compulsory service prevails, it is a simple matter to enforce sumptuary laws for officers, to enforce a harsh discipline, to grant but little leave, and to insist upon a high standard of military education; but under a voluntary system, especially where younger officers receive emoluments at a rate wholly inadequate, and are therefore compelled to

supplement out of their own pockets the votes of Parliament for the support of the Army, very tender treatment becomes necessary, and persuasion, not force, is the only means by which officers in sufficient numbers can be obtained and retained. Men, after all, are no less human than their officers. Under a compulsory system of service, a man may be subjected to every discomfort—and even to harsh treatment by his superiors ; but under voluntary enlistment, men's idiosyncrasies must be studied : and it becomes impossible, when the recruiting market is limited, and demand ever on a par with the supply, to clothe men in unappealing dress, to juggle with their limited pay, to quarter them all the year round in stationary camps far from every amusement and resource, and to stint them of furlough.

The highest possible state of efficiency is properly the main object in view of those entrusted both with the training and administration of officers and men of the Army, but subject to the governing condition that for every officer or man who leaves the Army the nation has to go hat in hand to another to replace him.

III

As Lord Roberts has pointed out, it is in numbers, both of officers and men, that the Army and its reserves are deficient to meet the

strain of a great war, and to fulfil the requirements which have been laid down and tacitly accepted by Parliament as essential to the maintenance of our Empire.

To make good this deficiency under a voluntary system, and at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer, is the object of Mr Haldane's recent changes, and of the Act of Parliament passed in 1907. A shortage of 7,000 officers, and a potential reserve quite unable to meet the demands of a great war, such as that by which Mr Balfour chose to illustrate his argument in the House of Commons, were the main considerations which prompted Mr Haldane to reconstruct the Land Forces of the Crown.

It is upon his success that the continuance of a voluntary system of enlistment must depend, if the domestic safety of this country is to be secured, and if British dominion is to be maintained in India.

The King's Colonial Dominions, growing rapidly in wealth and population, will before long be able to answer for their own safety, and for their connection with the Crown; but the peace and security of Great Britain and of India, depend upon the voluntary effort made by the people of these islands to train themselves to fight by sea and by land any Foreign Power which ventures to attack them.

IV

If numbers of trained men are necessary for our Empire, which cannot be protected by sea-power only, sound organisation is quite as essential; for in the opinion of all authorities, military and civil, who are qualified by experience to judge, it is organisation that wins battles in every sphere of human activity. Under modern conditions of life, whether in peace or in war, whether in commercial or military strategy, victory inclines to the force which is most thoroughly and highly organised.

In 1870 the population and armies of France and Germany were not disproportionate, except in so far as the organisation of Germany, systematised by careful forethought, was incomparably superior. In Manchuria, it was the system quite as much, and in truth more than the high quality of her troops, which led to the triumphs of Japan, and which equalised the enormous disproportion between her resources and those of Russia.

In the inevitable struggle which lies before Europe, with a Power numerically stronger than any other except Russia, and better organised for war than Frederick and Napoleon ever were, what chance have numerically weaker Powers

unless they too are organised in the same high degree?

Organisation implies forethought and preparation, and we are apt to think that because for centuries we managed well without either, and because from these small islands has grown an Empire world-wide in extent, an unsystematised method which has served so well in the past, will continue to serve us still.

This is to misread history, and the open book of the world's face to-day. It is the "Brown Bess" argument, familiar to soldiers nearly sixty years since.

Traits of character, as well as physical abilities, which obtained fine results amid people as forethoughtless as ourselves, lose tremendously in value when pitted against the growing organisation of the twentieth century. For organisation is the keynote of the days in which we are living, and without it all forms of prosperity are fleeting and are the sport of chance.

Mr Haldane, to judge by his speeches, possibly because of his German education, seems to be imbued with this notion. He apparently recognises that in order to prepare to meet a foreign foe, and to be ready to defend ourselves against attack, the nation must be thoroughly organised.

It will no longer suffice to have a crowd of armed men with stout hearts and generous

minds wholly ignorant of the difficulties of modern war. Numbers according to his schemes are necessary, but they must be organised numbers.

The idea underlying Mr Balfour's conception of a Defence Committee, was strategical forecast and preparation against possible attack. The present Prime Minister has greatly increased the scope and activities of the instrument forged by his predecessor.

Mr Haldane seems to desire to apply the same principle to the Army itself, and if he succeeds, then the mantle of Cardwell will have fallen upon his shoulders. What Mr Cardwell did for the Regular Army, by the rather dim military light of the 'seventies, Mr Haldane will have done in a far higher degree under the brighter illuminants of the present day. When we speak, however, of organisation, it is perhaps desirable to define the sense in which it is here used.

v

Organisation for war means thorough and sound preparation for war in all its branches, from the higher command to every source of supply. This would be the meaning applied to the word in the best managed commercial undertakings in Germany or the United States. The raising

of officers and men, their grouping into smaller and larger units, their physical and moral improvement, their supply with the *matériel* of war, and their education and training for obedience and command, are the fruits of a sound and practical organisation.

In what degree centralisation is necessary, where it can advantageously be dispensed with, and the piecing together of the whole complicated machinery of modern war—these are the problems which confront military organisers to-day, and which, from the varying conditions imposed by a voluntary system of military service, can never be wholly shelved.

It is not within the scope of this essay to allude further to the details of military organisation. The purpose of the writer is served if the comprehensive meaning of the word has been made plain, and the breadth of the field which lies ever before the military organiser has been clearly understood.

War is an amalgam of *personnel* and *matériel*, and success in war depends upon scrupulous attention being given to perfecting in peace its component parts.

And it is owing to the great complexity of the various parts of a whole, upon the perfection of which success depends, that the question arises whether the means taken to ensure good workmanship and supervision are adequate and

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the best possible. For upon whom does the weight of responsibility really lie?

With whom does the organisation of the Land Forces of the Crown rest, and who are the persons who, by their training and knowledge, are professionally competent to supervise the various branches and the infinite detail of this great concern?

From the lowest to the highest, from the subaltern in command of a half-company to the soldiers who sit on the Committee of Imperial Defence, the officers of the Army have to bear the burden in peace and the responsibility in war.

Every profession is, in a sense, self-supporting. The character and standard of capacity in every profession depend upon the profession itself. That of arms is no exception to the rule.

The methods by which the "Learned Professions" recruit and train young men are well known, and it is upon these methods proving efficacious that the reputation of the professions of the Church, the Law, of Medicine, and of Teaching, ultimately rests.

In all these professions certain tests are required, and certain encouragements are given, to those who desire to practise them.

According to the manner in which these tests are applied, and these encouragements are offered, is the standard of professional efficiency maintained.

If it is true that the security of the Empire largely depends upon the soundness of Army organisation, and that the organisation of the Army mainly rests upon the capacity of its officers, then the tests applied and the encouragement given to officers become matters of vital importance, not only to the Army but to the nation.

At this point it is worth while to put a question, and in all friendliness and perfect good faith, to suggest a doubt, whether the intellectual equipment of the average British officer of high rank and middle life is equal to that of men of the same standing in other professions.

That many officers of high rank hold their own, in all respects, with their peers in the professional or commercial world, is so obvious as not to be worth stating, except to avoid misconstruction. But the question concerns the average.

By eminent statesmen who have been brought into contact with officers, by politicians, by lawyers, and by men who have passed their lives in financial or mercantile affairs, and by members of the Civil Service, who see administrators from all classes of society, the thesis has been sustained that the average intellectual equipment, the power of careful reasoning, and the store of accumulated knowledge, together



with the habit of application, are inferior in the higher ranks of the Army to what is found in men in relative positions in other walks of life.

If this represents a true state of facts, and if the sound organisation of the Army turns on the intellectual equipment of its officers, then the Army lies under a disadvantage whatever the organisation which may be given to it. And if the facts are true, what is their cause, and where does the remedy lie?

VI

If a man fails to fulfil expectations formed of him, his judges and his critics are apt to examine his early life and its associations, and to seek there the cause of failure.

In the case of an individual, should judgment fall upon some influence or lapse in youth, which is assumed to be the underlying cause of a deplorable result later in life, such judgment may not always be right.

If, however, a whole family exhibit signs of similar failure, the case of those who contend that it is due to faulty upbringing is strengthened.

In considering a class or a nation, the deduction is rendered more probable still. If the habits of military officers are compared with those of other professional men, it will be found that up to the age of nineteen or twenty their

lives show no marked difference from the lives of other boys.

Again, where an officer reaches field rank, and is employed either in training troops or in administering some portion of the Army, his life is fairly laborious, his mind is expanding, and his ambition to succeed develops rapidly, after the manner of all men engaged in arduous pursuits.

But if we compare the period in a soldier's life, during the ten years between boyhood and manhood, during that period above all others when the habits of men become fixed on irrevocable lines, with these same ten years in the lives of the clergy, the lawyer, the Civil servant, or even of sea-officers, we find a marked and significant difference.

When an officer joins the Army, he is very properly subjected to the discipline which follows from learning the technical elements of any profession. Until his promotion to the rank of lieutenant, his time is fully occupied, and his attention constantly on the stretch.

When his first promotion comes, whatever the arm of the Service, although in a lesser degree in the more technical branches, the tension is somewhat relaxed.

Generally speaking, however, his working hours become fewer, and by the time an officer reaches the immature age of two or three and

twenty, he is generally free after one o'clock in the afternoon. If he is rich, he can devote his day to any form of sport, or to any of those manly games, which differentiate the British regimental officers from the officers of all other armies, and for certain purposes, are an invaluable form of training for war.

It would be a calamity for the Army and for the nation if the love of sport were to lose its hold on the youth of the nation.

But the poorer officers are restricted by their poverty, and however keen in desire, indulgence is limited by the length of their purse.

It happens, then, that time hangs heavily on the hands of many young men, who have no inclination to idle, but have no inducement and no call to find employment.

In almost every other profession a young man is provided with an inducement, or is forced to work during many hours of the common working day.

In the learned professions, advancement and wealth depend upon hard work, while the Navy is fortunate, owing to its limited numbers, in being able to impose, without fear of diminishing the supply, a considerable strain upon younger officers.

With the Army the case is altogether different. The demand for officers and the supply are by no means out of all proportion, and when the

tastes of large numbers of excellent regimental officers, and the reasons for which they enter the Army are realised, it is abundantly plain that to impose upon them conditions out of all keeping with their emoluments and prospects, would be to lose the better class of young men of the type which all experienced soldiers are anxious to retain in the Service. To force them to work, and to employ arbitrary means to make them acquire habits of application, are not remedies. It is inducement and not force which is required.

At the same time, the inference appears to be irresistible, that the failure of the average British officer of field rank to hold his own with men of the same standing in other professions, is due to the more or less wasted years between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five.

How often does it happen that a keen and ambitious man, on the threshold of high command, alive to all the grave responsibilities about to fall upon him, laboriously preparing himself to bear them, is heard to lament those wasted years ! He is conscious of a limited scope of essential knowledge, and he tries hard to make up for lost time. But he has never acquired the habit of application, and work weighs heavily upon him. He ardently desires information, but he has never learnt by practice how to seek it. He has no idea what are the books to read, and, what is worse, he has no notion of the right way to

read them. He is like a gallant horse striving under the hands and knees of an inexperienced horseman.

It is a sad picture, often seen in the higher ranks of the Army, most creditable to the fine body of gentlemen of whom those ranks are composed, but discreditable to the system under which their youth spent itself. What, then, is the remedy?

vii

What inducement can be offered to a young man during these crucial years to which allusion has been made, which will lead him to adopt habits of application, and to prepare himself for the higher needs of the profession?

A young man leaving school for a university life soon realises that at college he is not *forced* to work, that he may idle through days and weeks and months without restraint; but he also soon discovers that unless he chooses to apply his mind to some definite course of study, the prizes of a university career will be denied him.

At the Bar, in the medical profession, and in the Church, the same discovery is made at an early stage in a man's career. The temptation in all these cases is advancement.

Periodical tests spread over a course of years,

which performe imply extensive and systematic reading, are the means employed.

By this avenue only can a man reach the goal which is his aim. The inducement to read in all these professions lies in the fact that reading leads to an objective which is not far ahead, in dim distance but is within reach of the student.

Many young soldiers try to acquire from books scientific knowledge of their profession. But human nature being what it is, their efforts are bound to be spasmodic. A young man is suddenly fired, by example or precept, with a desire to be a general, and it is borne in upon him that this implies an acquaintance with military history. He most laudably works for a week or a month at the strategy of a campaign. He writes a meritorious *précis* and draws a map or two. Then it is borne in upon him that he cannot be a general for twenty years or so, and he says to himself, "There is plenty of time," and succumbs to the attraction of the anteroom fire and a novel.

All this is very human and very natural, life and youth being what they are. How in the world could it be otherwise? Possibly he may think of the Staff College. But then he discovers that the capacity of the Staff College is very limited, and that the competition is very severe. Besides, the men with whom he would have to compete are years older than himself. Dis-

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heartened, he turns aside. Perhaps, incidentally, he hears that in order to mobilise Mr Haldane's six Divisions of the Regular Army, at least two hundred more officers, having had a staff training, would be required; and that in order to mobilise any portion of the Territorial Army no staff-trained officers are available at all. This he looks upon as a humorous eccentricity on the part of the high military authorities, but it seems to open no special avenue for his youthful ambition.

In point of fact, does not the solution of the whole problem lie in these facts? Mr Haldane has grasped and pressed home the idea that officers must "specialise" for certain administrative posts, and must be scientifically trained to perform certain administrative duties. No man is forced by Mr Haldane's scheme to specialise, but he is given an inducement to do so.

It may be said that to enter the Staff College is an inducement to a certain class of officer, but the limited capacity of the Staff College renders this inducement nugatory in the case of young officers anxious to qualify themselves for staff work, and quite capable of being trained sufficiently for lighter forms. To enlarge the capacity of the college so as to admit of training any officer who desires to qualify himself for staff work, would entail a cost which is pro-

hibitive, even if there were not other and obvious reasons which make such a solution impractical.

There are, however, other methods, which, although they would involve a change in the conception hitherto attached to a Staff College course, are not unworthy of consideration.

Whatever the original intentions of those who devised the Staff College were, it has become not so much a training school for men with the highest qualifications for special staff work, as an avenue of all kinds of promotion in all branches of the Army.

The danger of suggesting a definite plan always is, that readers fix upon any blot which appears to them a fatal objection, and proceed not only to condemn the plan, but the whole argument upon which the necessity for some plan or other is founded.

Any plan, however, if framed to remedy the defects which have been pointed out, should be based upon certain clear principles. It must provide an inducement for young men between the ages mentioned to work at Military History, at Military Geography, at Strategy and Tactics, and it should provide means for maintaining their interest in these subjects.

Annual tests of progress, as at the universities, should be insisted upon, provided that they are not made difficult of access, or an excuse for

relieving officers of their regimental and routine duties.

The whole idea which underlies this argument is that time now available, but wasted, should be utilised — not by disciplinary rules, but voluntarily and by inducement.

It should not be beyond the ingenuity of those entrusted with the training of officers to devise a scheme by which young men could be tempted to qualify themselves by a triennial course of reading to act as "emergency staff officers."

Even if the list of those "qualified" according to such tests became a long one, it could never be too long for our possible requirements. From this list, and from this list only, officers might be selected for the personal staff—or for adjutancies of battalions or regiments. Thus another inducement would be offered to young men to devote some hours of the day to intellectual exercise.

From this list, and not necessarily by competition, but by selection tempered by further tests, the most highly gifted might be chosen for a course of Staff College training, using that college as a real training school, and not merely as an avenue of advancement.

These are not definite suggestions, but only indications of the line along which enquiry by those seeking a remedy might possibly move.

Once admit that the evil is real, and once grasp the true principles upon which an improved system should be based, and the remedial measures cannot well escape the fertile and practical minds of the officers who are entrusted at the present time with the training of the Army.

IV

NATIONAL STRATEGY

I

A GENERATION ago France lay prostrate and the German Empire was born. When men began to seek the causes of these mighty events they were found to be the natural result of patient careful military preparation by a number of highly trained Prussian officers, and of want of military foresight on the part of the French. No more striking example of the effect of careful scientific study of military problems on the part of the victors and of careless methods on the part of the vanquished can be found in history.

From that period dates a new military era. The lessons of 1870-71 were taken seriously to heart by all the civilised Powers of the world. Even through the Far East, to which Western ideas had hitherto been alien, the shock of the four great battles on the Rhenish frontier permeated, and Japan became, in a marvellously short space of time, a factor in the political and strategic problems of mankind.

Rapidly the Great Powers began to set their military households in order — adopting the German model; while France, slowly recovering from the exhaustion of war, thanks to the marvellous frugality of her people, gradually resumed her historic place in the Councils of Europe.

But England, while she added enormous tracts in North and South Africa to the Empire, only half grasped the truth that the responsibilities of Imperial rule involve corresponding effort, although by the combined action of a few farsighted writers in the Press and one or two patriotic sailors, the Fleet, which had been permitted to sink below the level of safety, was placed upon an adequate footing.

Just as the books of Seeley had opened the eyes of his countrymen to the expansion of their Empire, so the writings of Mahan expounded to all men the doctrine of the value of Sea-Power.

Under the romantic spell of Lord Beaconsfield the full meaning of Imperial rule began slowly to dawn on the minds of Britons. A prolific and hardy race, squeezed out of their narrow islands, their surplus energy aided by their love of fighting, suddenly became aware that they had created such an Empire as the world had never known. It was a growth rather than a creation; a struggle for existence rather than for power. A new school of political thought



swept the old ideas away, and the parochial politician of the nineteenth became the colonial statesman of the twentieth century.

Some future historian will, doubtless, trace the economic and social forces which drove congeries of States into closer union, and which brought about first the growth, then the conception, and finally the clash of Empires.

Scientific thought is uncongenial to the British temperament in commerce and in statecraft. As we have lived, so we live on from hand to mouth and from day to day. There are, however, times when some great danger from which the country has contrived to escape brings home to us the vast risks which are incurred by the neglect of principles and truths which history and experience teach. At such moments England pauses, and surveys for a short time her sea-girt Empire, and counts the forces upon which that Empire rests, and against which it may have to contend. Such a breathing space was granted after the recent war in South Africa, and upon the correctness of the estimate thus formed the future may possibly depend.

Though some may yet be found to deny that the material prosperity and moral greatness of England rest largely on her Imperial status, the sense of our countrymen all over the world holds to the contrary opinion; while all alike would admit that Imperial rule can have no other

ultimate basis than adequate and organised physical force.

In a memorable phrase Mahan has summed up the case, and has shown how “Nelson’s storm-tossed ships, on which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the Empire of the World.”

II

“War, far from being an exact science, is a terrible and passionate drama.” Yet, Jomini would not have denied that scientific preparation for war contributes largely to success. A nation in case of war should have determined beforehand where to strike, and should be prepared to strike.

In 1866 and again in 1870, Prussia reaped the advantage of forethought and scientific preparation.

Königgrätz, and the four great battles of August and September 1870, are a tribute to intellectual quite as much as to material force.

Austria and France went to war *en amateur*. The French Commanders had a loosely conceived plan of a dash across the Rhine, and of interposing a French army between northern and southern Germany. As a strategical conception the plan was not unsound, but no details

had been worked out for rapid mobilisation, and still less for concentration ; and long before any advance could be made, the victorious Prussian armies had taken the initiative invaluable in war and were over the frontier, threatening the road to Paris.

In 1876 the Russians, in spite of overwhelming numbers, failed to reap the fruits of enormous sacrifices, by neglect of that primary duty of great aggressive Empires, which is to be prepared for war in times of profound peace.

In 1899 Great Britain exhibited to the world similar failings.

On the other hand, the striking successes of Japan proved once more, if proof were wanted, the inestimable value in war of readiness and forethought.

It is well known that for years the Japanese fully foresaw the certainty of a struggle with Russia. Schemes were elaborated and every detail of preparation attended to with precision and care, so that the long-expected blow fell where it had been planned to fall, with extraordinary rapidity and success.

Again we have the triumph of intellectual force exemplified, when material forces were not unequally balanced.

It is realised in Germany that the French have learnt the lesson of 1870, and that some of the acutest minds in France have been for

many years devoted to the consideration of problems of defence and offence. That the French have not adopted the views of German strategists, but have struck out a line of defence based on different principles of war, is also fully realised at Berlin; and there is no German officer of distinction who is not aware that in a future struggle between the two nations the contest will not be decided on the battlefields of 1870-71.

The French have, by a chain of fortresses of great strength closing all roads upon which it would be possible to penetrate into France from the east and north-east, "deprived strategy of its mobility," and they will be practically able in any future war with their old antagonists to select their own field of battle. There is no reason to doubt that the French can concentrate their field army, in positions long since selected, as rapidly as the Germans.

These are the factors of the problems which the Great General Staff at Berlin are continually engaged in considering. There are many divergent opinions as to their proper solution, and only the test of war can decide their relative merits; but the German Staff are bound, by every claim of prudence, to decide upon a definite scheme, and to keep ready all the essential orders and instructions for the strategic concentration of their armies.

No one with any knowledge of the scientific habits of thought characteristic of Germans doubts that every detail is complete and every order ready to be issued.

It is worth while here to consider a few of the problems which those concerned with the defence of the British Empire have to solve, as well as the machinery employed hitherto for their solution. It may then be possible to draw some conclusion as to what still requires to be provided.

How many Englishmen alive are there who have thought consecutively and scientifically upon National Strategy? And of these, how many are in the direct employ of the State for this purpose? The problems involved are numerous and ever-changing, as new responsibilities are incurred and when the conditions of warfare are modified by scientific invention.

The occupation of Egypt, the annexation of the Dutch Republics in South Africa, and the Japanese Alliance, profoundly affected the National Strategy of the Empire. The invention of the submarine vessel, and the Marconi system of telegraphy, will unquestionably lead to still greater modifications.

The occupation of Egypt, followed as it must be by the consolidation of French influence in Morocco,¹ cannot fail to affect conditions in

¹ This was written before the Treaty with France was made public.

the Mediterranean, which has ever been, and still remains, the centre of European gravity. The removal of a menace to our Colonial possessions in South Africa, and the provision of an unrivalled and secure training-ground for troops half way between these islands and the East Indies, opens up novel strategic questions which await solution.

Submarine boats, coupled with a system of rapid communication by wireless telegraphy, will not impossibly alter the schemes of defence for our coaling stations all over the world.

The Japanese Alliance, coupled with the destruction of the Russian fleet in the Far East, has changed the balance of Sea Power in the Pacific.

On the other hand, the growing fleets of the United States and of Germany introduce from year to year fresh elements and new political considerations.

The questions confronting the Great General Staff of the German Army are constantly undergoing revision, but they are simple and stable compared with those affecting our world-wide Empire. There is hardly any point on the earth's surface which can change ownership, and certainly no modification in the relative power of any two foreign states can take place, without affecting the National Strategy of Great Britain.

The Admiralty possess a well-organised system

of recording, in times of peace, the movement of ships all over the world. At any hour during the day the Sea Lords are able to locate the position of a British or foreign vessel, and to calculate the precise effect upon our fleets of the movements of foreign ships of war.

The Naval Intelligence Branch can thus from day to day amend and alter plans for the distribution of the Fleet, as well as schemes of naval defence, in the event of the country being suddenly and unexpectedly plunged into war.

Our Admirals are constantly reminded that the supremacy of the seas may, at any time, be decided within a space of twenty-four hours. In order to face such an eventuality with prospects of success, the ever-varying conditions under which the Battle Fleet may have to contend are constantly kept in view.

But by what competent authority are the ever-changing conditions of Imperial Strategy systematically considered?

III

Private and public records show that from the close of the Peninsular War to the end of the South African Campaign no systematic consideration of what can best be described as National Strategy existed, either within the

Cabinet or the Departments of State. The Duke of Wellington could not altogether divest himself of military instinct, in spite of the cares of domestic policy. Lord Palmerston possessed a taste for such problems. Lord Beaconsfield took aerial flights into the region of Imperial defence. But it has been left to publicists, without any special knowledge, but dependent upon newspapers and books, to endeavour to inspire Englishmen with the spirit of strategical enquiry. Mahan's work came as a revelation. The influence of Sea Power is now, after a few short years, a platitude of political journalism, but the deeper practical lessons of Mahan's teaching have been learnt slowly, and have only quite recently — aided by the South African War—borne fruit. To Lord Salisbury belongs the credit of having appointed a Committee of the Cabinet for the consideration of questions of National Defence. Presided over by the Duke of Devonshire, the Committee met seldom, and generally for the consideration of some urgent question of the moment, but from this evanescent creation there was evolved, when Mr Balfour became Prime Minister, a very different body, with wider aims and greater aptitudes.

For the first time in English history some attention was given, by responsible statesmen, to National and Imperial Strategy, involving

not only the Military but the Naval and Indian forces of the Crown.

In Mr Balfour the country possessed a Minister with a mind sharpened by dialectics, and a temper chastened by philosophic enquiry, who was peculiarly fitted for the task of sifting the often conflicting opinions of military and naval experts. His judicial summaries and final decisions are recorded in State papers of quite extraordinary interest and value.

These documents form the earliest record of an attempt to deal systematically with questions affecting National Strategy.

For some years a Colonial Defence Committee and a joint Naval and Military Committee had constantly met to discuss the defence of isolated stations within the Empire; but the power of initiative was wanting on both bodies, and many of their recommendations passed unheeded. Their purview was not wide enough, and their functions were very properly limited.

The Defence Committee, on the other hand, as now constituted, deals with the largest problems, and, having the Prime Minister as Chairman, contains within itself the source of political and practical initiative.

Mr Balfour claimed the right to vary its component parts, for, like the first idea of the Cabinet itself, time is required to enable this

novel growth to take root in the political institutions of the country.

Signs have not been wanting of misconception and jealousy aroused in the minds of politicians mistrustful of a novel political force, which they do not see their way to control by campaigns on the platform or in the Press.

The Defence Committee has been hitherto in name a Committee of the Cabinet. In reality it has been nothing of the kind. While the Prime Minister has been the Chairman of it, and the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty, and occasionally other Secretaries of State have been summoned to attend, its most important members have been the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty and the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Commander-in-Chief and the Director-General of Military Intelligence, and recently the Chief of the General Staff and the Director of Military Operations at the War Office.

The principal Members of the Indian Council were summoned to its deliberations when questions affecting India were under discussion, and on one occasion an eminent Colonist was asked to be present.

In order to realise the novelty of this procedure, and the change which has occurred, it is only necessary to note that during the early sittings of the South African War Commission,

when Sir William Nicholson, then Director-General of Military Intelligence, was asked whether his assistance had ever been sought by the Defence Committee, he not only replied in the negative, but professed complete ignorance of the procedure, and almost the existence, of that mysterious body.¹

That, within a few months, a Committee presided over by the Prime Minister, constituted with the full knowledge and regular assistance of the principal Naval and Military Authorities, should meet as often as once a week for the systematic discussion of Imperial questions of Defence, and should attempt to lay down principles of Imperial and National Strategy, and to work out schemes for defensive, and, if necessary, for offensive operations of War, is a startling and welcome innovation in our methods of government.

So far, Mr Balfour's work, by far the most important and far-reaching act of his Administration, is admirable, and full of hopeful possibilities.

Much, however, remains to be done.

IV

The primary step should be to give continuity and permanence to the Defence Committee.

¹ Similar questions were purposely put to other high military authorities with similar results.

Records of great value, embodying the labours of the Committee, are at present scattered among its Members, or in charge of an extemporised secretary.¹ There are no arrangements ensuring that Mr Balfour's work, and the decisions of the Committee, will be placed at the service of his successor in office.

Not only may this involve work being done over again, but the threads of a policy may easily become entangled or lost. There is no Staff, and there are no records, by which the tradition can be handed on from one Administration to another.

In order to remedy this grave defect, it is desirable to apply the principles which govern the Civil Service of the country to the Defence Committee, and to supply the Prime Minister with a Branch or Department, whose business would be to preserve the records, and thus safeguard the traditions of National Strategy.

For these purposes a Secretary and a small Staff and a suitable building are required. It has been proposed that this Department should be under the Prime Minister of the day, and the Secretary should be the Secretary of the Defence Committee. He would attend its meetings, where he would have no voice, but he would be the compiler of its minutes and the guardian of its records.

¹ The suggestions contained in Section IV. have been adopted.

Several objections have been urged to the appointment of such an official, but they are none of them convincing, and they cannot even be said to be weighty.

It has been urged that a Permanent Secretary to the Defence Committee would, if he were a capable man, acquire too preponderating an authority in the National Councils.

Precisely the same argument could be urged against the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, yet successive Civil servants of great ability have filled that high office to the advantage of the State.

It is urged that such an official and his staff would interfere with the work of the Chief of the General Staff of the War Office, and thereby create confusion and friction.

It is, however, obvious that their functions need not clash.

The problems which the Defence Committee are asked to solve are problems involving considerations not solely of a military character, but concerned with Naval, Indian, Colonial, and Political issues with which the Chief of the General Staff is not of necessity primarily in touch.

Many examples could be given, but two will suffice.

Take the alliance between England and Japan, and assume the *status quo* before the outbreak

of hostilities between Japan and Russia as the conditions precedent: should Hong-Kong be defended, and if so how, are essentially problems for the Defence Committee.

Another question which has often been asked, but has never yet been answered, that is, for what purposes is the British Army required? is one to which the Defence Committee might pay some degree of regard.

On the other hand, assuming that Hong-Kong is to be defended by troops and forts,¹ what number of troops are required, and of what type? These are questions for the General Staff of the Army; and it would be for the General Staff to say, when once the purposes for which the British Army is intended have been laid down, what numbers are wanted, and how they should be distributed.

In short, National Strategy, though it must be considered by the General Staff of the Army, must be decided by the Defence Committee, whereas purely Military Strategy is in all its bearings mainly a matter for the General Staff, just as Naval Strategy is mainly a matter for the Intelligence Branch of the Admiralty.

In discussing the functions of the Defence Committee, it should not be forgotten that both the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the General Staff are invariably summoned to its delibera-

¹ This is merely a hypothesis, and not a suggestion.

tions, as well as their principal Assistants, so that upon questions of Imperial Strategy they have their say, although a final decision rests with neither of them.

To suppose that complicated questions of Imperial Strategy, involving combined Naval and Military preparations, and possibly the assistance of India, or the adherence of the Colonies, could be settled satisfactorily by the Admiralty, or the War Office, or by communications between the two Departments, as they were formerly carried on, is to exhibit a confused sense of practical possibilities, as well as callousness to the lessons of experience.

That hitherto there has been a want of co-ordination between the two great Services is not only a fact, but it is explained by the absence of a proper co-ordinating body.

The Cabinet, as a whole, has neither the time nor the special capacity for the task. Most of its Members are not qualified to consider and decide the questions involved, but, above all, they are occupied with duties, parliamentary and administrative, which take up all their available time.

The Defence Committee, as constituted by Mr Balfour, may not be an ideal body, as conceivable by a Sieyès or any other constitution-monger, but it is a practical and workable machine, which fits in with our Parliamentary and Administrative Institutions, and in no degree

impairs the final responsibility of the Cabinet to Parliament.

And it is reasonable to expect that, when supplied with a suitable Staff, the Defence Committee will fulfil duties vital to the safety of the Empire, which up to the present time have been insufficiently performed; and that we may look forward to possessing Naval and Military Forces calculated upon their joint and not separate uses, and distributed economically with regard to our Imperial requirements.

v

The origin and opening of the Boer War is so fresh in the minds of our countrymen that it is worth while to consider what course events might have taken had the Defence Committee been constituted as at present, and in operation, during the three years preceding the Ultimatum of Mr Kruger in October 1899.

Would it, for instance, have been necessary for a Director-General of the Ordnance, possessing the independence of character of Sir Henry Brackenbury, to prefer such an indictment as that officer laid before the Government in December of that year, after the outbreak of the war, showing the utter unpreparedness of the country to undertake the initial defence of the Empire in case of attack?

Would it have been possible for the Boers to have armed themselves to the teeth during three years, with the full knowledge of the Military Authorities in Pall Mall, and to have prepared for hostilities which could only have had one possible objective, without any corresponding preparation on the part of the British Government, even so elementary as the thorough mapping of Natal and of the north of Cape Colony?

Would it have been possible to carry on political negotiations for many months in a dangerous state of tension without adequate consideration being given to questions of supply and the accumulation of animal and wheeled transport, and of an initial plan of campaign?

Would it have been possible to have overlooked for three crucial years the vital importance of Delagoa Bay, and to have failed to make arrangements with Portugal, impossible after the outbreak of war, but which, had they been made in time of peace, might have shortened the conflict by two years?

It is not contended that all these questions were primarily for the Defence Committee. They are, several of them, purely military matters, with which a well-organised General Staff could adequately deal. But they all of them possess a bearing upon National Strategy of immense importance, and in view of the political exigencies of the time, could not have escaped the

consideration of a Prime Minister, had he been constantly in personal touch with the Naval and Military Authorities, not spasmodically, but in the natural and ordinary way of business at weekly meetings of the Defence Committee.

It is always undesirable to tread the delicate ground of hypothesis when discussing International relations; but after all, the decaying Persian Empire, the growing power of Russia in the East, the storm-swayed kingdom of Afghanistan, and our Imperial interests in the Indian Ocean are realities and not dreams. Possible new combinations of Great Powers, the shipbuilding estimates of rival States, the Oriental Renaissance, led by Japan, are conditions of the future which cannot be ignored.

It is wholly unscientific, it is not common-sense, to contend that problems based upon considerations such as these should be left to some fugitive hour of a Cabinet discussion, or to the chance reflections of a harassed, but more than ordinarily prescient, Minister.

They and many others which will occur to the mind of every Englishman are the subject matter for a Defence Committee. They are fruitful of thought and labour, because they are ever-changing.

It is only a man ungifted with imagination, or hide-bound with red tape, who could contend that a "permanent nucleus"—as the Department for

the Defence Committee has been called—is not as much wanted for the President of such a Committee as for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, or for even the Board of Agriculture.

To maintain, as some do, that to consider carefully problems which may only be soluble by force of arms, and to be prepared for war, is to increase the risk of War, is a futile contention, and there is no clearer proof of its futility than this fact, that of all Great Nations on the earth, the British Empire has displayed least military forethought, and yet, for fifty years, hardly a year has passed when Peace has reigned within her frontiers.

Yet, it must not be assumed that because the Fates have been exceptionally kind, and because we have, as one of our Prime Ministers has said, hitherto “muddled through” successfully, we shall inevitably be so fortunate.

In the long run, luck in War is on the side of statesmen who by prudence and forethought bend it to their will.

27th March 1904.

V

THE STUDY OF MODERN HISTORY¹

IT is with some trepidation and reluctance that I consented, at the request of Sir John French, to speak to such an audience and in such a place.

Nothing but the unvarying kindness which I have received in this command would have tempted me, for I do not claim to possess any of the aptitudes of a lecturer, or the skill of that large body of persons who seem to enjoy addressing their fellow-countrymen. I must ask your pardon beforehand, should I, during what I have to say, lapse into a tone which may be thought didactic. It would show a want of courtesy, which I should regret; but the mere term "lecture" implies a form of speech which is far from the spirit in which I am addressing you.

Another doubt which has assailed me is the difficulty of a topic. I could not venture to speak to you upon a purely military subject, and I was tempted to decline altogether, when

¹ A lecture delivered at Aldershot 15th January 1907, to the officers of the command.

I remembered a lecture to which I listened with great interest, and I hope some advantage, years ago, on the value of the study of modern history to professional men. It then occurred to me that I might be able to say something on the value of the study of modern history to a soldier, which might perhaps be of interest.

We are all of us apt to confound the educational importance of the study of a subject, with its direct professional use: and to forget that the greatest zeal and enthusiasm for professional detail will not save a man, in the outer world, from being treated as an ignoramus, by men whose ability he cannot deny, if his professional aptitude is not based upon a wide foundation of professional knowledge.

But what, it may be asked, has this to do with the study of modern history, or with the connection between that study and the profession of arms?

The answer is, that every officer, if he is worth his salt, hopes and expects to become a general, that a general is almost bound to have duties thrust upon him beyond those of actual command, and that modern history is the school of generalship.

It has often been pointed out that war is not an exact science, but a great drama, played—with more or less skill—by actors swayed by human passion and human weakness. And

modern history, being in great measure the illustration and the record of human passions and weakness, becomes an integral part of the knowledge without which no actor on the stage of what is so aptly called the theatre of war can successfully play his part.

Before, however, pursuing the enquiry as to what constitutes modern history from the point of view of the soldier, and the various methods of studying it, I should like to draw your attention for a moment to the manifestations of the value of a knowledge of it in the careers of some of the greatest of your predecessors. Of our own countrymen, the commanders in war who loom largest in the eyes of all men beyond, as well as within these islands, are Marlborough, Wellington, and Nelson.

Of the Duke of Marlborough it was said by his brilliant contemporary, Bolingbroke, "that he was the greatest statesman and the greatest general that this country, or any other country, had ever produced." It is not to the exaggerated terms of this eulogy that I wish to draw your attention, but to the circumstance that to his statesmanship, rather than to generalship, priority is given by so shrewd a judge as Bolingbroke. In order to realise the skill of Marlborough as a statesman and diplomatist, we must think of the period between Ramillies and Oudenarde, and of his uninterrupted

intimate relations with Prince Eugene, and his management of Charles XII. of Sweden. From his despatches to Godolphin, and his correspondence with Prince Eugene, it becomes evident that although he was proud of saying that his historical knowledge was confined to the pages of Shakespeare, his generalship was founded on reasoned information about the history of his time, and that this information was the mainspring of his extraordinary success.

What has been said of Marlborough is profoundly true, that his transcendent ability as a general, a statesman, a diplomatist and an administrator, guided not only England, but Europe, through the war of the Spanish succession. The question I want you to consider is, what chance this country would have had in maintaining the struggle against the ambition of Louis XIV., had our destinies been entrusted to a soldier less deeply versed in the knowledge of the great problems at issue, and of the history of the nations with which he was brought into contact and into conflict.

To open casually, almost at any page, the despatches of the Duke of Wellington, is to be struck by his thorough acquaintance with, not only the personality of the men who were directing the armies of Europe, but with the cross-motives of statesmen and politicians, of states and provinces, and of the historical causes

which were operating not only in Europe, but beyond the Atlantic, and which all, directly or indirectly, affected the difficult attempt in which he was engaged, to hang on to the edge of the Spanish Peninsula, against apparently overwhelming force.

An illustration of his range of information may be found in a memorandum dated the 8th February 1808, in which he discusses at great length the policy of effecting a revolution in the Spanish dominions of America. It is as good an example as any other which may be culled from his despatches, of the trained mind, and wide knowledge, which, quite as much as the prestige of his victories, enabled him to hold his own, not only with those who were opposing him at home, but with the shrewdest intellects of the Continent at the Congress of Vienna, and during the whole of the year 1815, preceding and following the Battle of Waterloo.

Of Nelson it is difficult to speak in this connection, without apparent exaggeration of phrase. Upon his power of penetrating the schemes of his opponents, upon his acute and decisive understanding of political situations, rest his greatest achievements. His failures too are worth study, for they were nearly always failures to persuade his superiors to do the right thing, and to impart to them his marvellous insight. Those who have taken Nelson largely on trust, may dwell on his

sailor's instinct, but those who have looked at his vast correspondence will appreciate the amount of time and thought which throughout his life he gave to the history of that century of fighting which led up to the final destruction of the French and Spanish fleets.

To use a phrase which is very familiar to you, Nelson's "Appreciations" of the political factors governing a situation, such, for instance, as that which confronted Great Britain when face to face with the Northern Combination in 1801, are an object lesson to all those upon whom the responsibility of high command in war may fall. Without that profound study of which I have spoken, such accurate insight would degenerate into guess work and mere conjectures.

From this digression I would ask you to go back to the enquiry as to what constitutes modern history from the point of view of the soldier.

One of the greatest masters of our language in the nineteenth century, perhaps the greatest—and a very peace-loving man—once defined a soldier's duty. "A soldier's vow," he said, "to his country is that he will die for the guardianship of her domestic virtue, of her righteous laws, and of her anyway challenged, or endangered honour." If we accept this definition, the study of modern history would appear to embrace, for a soldier, an examination of such possible or probable contingencies as might imperil the

domestic virtue or righteous laws of our country, or endanger our national honour.

It must be evident that the domestic virtue, by which the writer meant the hearths and homes of our people, can only be imperilled by external attack. Righteous laws, on the other hand, may be subverted by internal convulsion. While our national honour is bound up with the maintenance of our engagements to other states, and with our responsibility for subject races and our dependencies all over the world. It is to modern history that the soldier, and the statesman, must look for guidance, if he seeks to forecast the possible peril, and the actual duties and responsibilities, which may at any time lay upon him the burden of redeeming his vow.

In a lecture of this kind it is impossible to be exhaustive, and I can only venture upon a few illustrations of my meaning.

There is no phrase, which from the days of Elizabeth, Englishmen have been fonder of, when speaking of their country, than that of this “Sea-girt Isle.” It has always appealed to our self-complacency, and to a comfortable sense of security. Long since the phrase has ceased to have its ancient meaning, and to bear the sense in which our forefathers used it. But men use it still, and indeed what in slang terms is called the “Blue Water School” base their contention

upon its descriptive accuracy. Yet, if modern history teaches any lesson at all, it is the transformation of this island kingdom into an Empire with frontiers, like those of other states, contiguous to the military powers of the world.

Although the British are an island race, they are no longer an island state.

When I first made this remark (upon the epigrammatic turn of which I rather prided myself) to a young officer, I was told it was a platitude.

What is the meaning of platitude? It means a truth so obvious as not to require defending or even perhaps stating. If then this notion that we are no longer an island state is so obvious that it hardly requires defending or even stating, the theories of the extreme "Blue Water School" have no sound historical basis. I am not alluding here to the school of thought, at the head of which stands Sir John Fisher—a master of the arts of naval strategy and of parliamentary tactics—but of the exaggerators, the men who, to serve some political end, tear a sound reason to tatters.

For stripped of verbiage, the argument of the extreme "Blue Water School" amounts to this, that Great Britain requires for defence the strongest possible Navy, and subject to that condition, her Army may be reduced to a police force for the Empire in time of peace.

There never was a more fatal illusion.

I do not suppose there is a soldier here who does not believe in the Navy, or who doubts that with our seafaring population, our coasts and harbours, our possessions scattered over the ocean, and our enormous population dependant upon food imports, the first duty of a statesman is to ensure that our Fleet should be at least equal to the fleets of any two powers not only in Europe but in the world. That is common ground.

I yield to no one in admiration for the historical and reflective writings of Captain Mahan. His books on "Sea Power" opened up a new phase of military thought, not only in Europe and America, but in the Far East, and have produced a world-wide effect. But, at the same time, I know of no recent writings that have indirectly done more mischief in this country, by strengthening our self-complacent attitude of mind, and by inducing us to hold more strongly than ever to the view that we are, thanks to a powerful Navy, safeguarded against attack and disaster. To hold such a view is to misread not only modern history, but ancient history as well.

It is not Captain Mahan's fault that his meaning has been travestied, and his deductions misrepresented and misunderstood. It would seem clear that the inference he desires to draw

from the events which are so admirably described in his books, is that, other things being equal, the command of the sea gives victory; and that without adequate sea-power no nation is a “great power.”

Any one familiar with the modern history of Europe would understand that when Captain Mahan, in a fine passage, says that “Nelson’s storm-tossed ships upon which Napoleon had never looked, stood between him and the dominion of the world,” he never meant to imply or suggest that the rising of Europe after 1812, and the coalition armies, and Wellington’s tenacity in the Peninsula, were not quite as important factors in destroying Napoleon’s supremacy in Europe as the British Fleet.

In 1806—a year after Trafalgar—we were in complete command of the sea. The French and Spanish fleets were non-existent. Yet Napoleon was at the height of his power after Jena, and practically master of the Continent. Suppose for a moment that the treaty of Tilsit had remained operative, and that the Franco-Russian alliance had been maintained unbroken, of what avail would have been Nelson’s victory or Collingwood’s all-powerful fleet? We should have been forced to make peace, Belgium and Holland would have remained French possessions, slowly but surely we must have lost command of the sea, and the British Empire,

commercially and politically, as we know it, would never have come into existence.

The study of modern history suggests this comment upon the doctrines of the extreme "Blue Water School," that sea-power may be a decisive but cannot be the sole factor in a war for empire, just as an overwhelmingly powerful artillery may be the decisive but cannot be the sole factor in determining the fate of a battle. I have but to remind you of the American civil war, and of the causes which led to the ultimate triumph of the North, to recall another example of the truth of this proposition.

Captain Mahan's thesis has been mischievously used to prove much more than he contended for. He has, for instance, never maintained that in the great wars for European independence against Louis XIV. and Napoleon, victory was achieved by fleet power alone, and his volumes show clearly how much alive he is to the fact that, in order to bring those wars to a final conclusion, vast armies were required, which in numbers exceeded those of France.

He would be the first to assert that for the national security of Great Britain, and for the safety of our vast heterogeneous empire, a powerful Navy is a necessity, but it is incredible that he would deny that a large military force for defence against aggression, and possibly to check the abnormal and dangerous growth of

a hostile and competitive power, is no less a condition of our continued existence as a free people.

I think that from what I have said, you will agree that the value of the study of modern history to a soldier is to throw light beforehand, and in good time, upon the uses to which our Army may be applied. It is often said that the purposes for which an army is required have not been fully laid down by Cabinets, or by the Committee of Imperial Defence. A little consideration, a short examination of our national history during the past sixty years, will show that although the Defence Committee may properly be asked to establish a standard for the Army, just as years ago a standard, the two-Power standard, was laid down for the Navy, it would be rash and dangerous to attempt officially, except in very general terms, to stereotype a definition of the purposes for which the Army is required.

The uses to which, for instance, this army corps may be put, are limited, it is true, by the geographical and political configuration of foreign states, and of our own colonies and dependencies, but within these limits variation is almost endless. We can, however, by study and examination, gauge the greater possibilities and even the greater probabilities. That is the task to which the study of modern history invites

us, just as it lured Lord Roberts—as we know from his evidence before the War Commission—to plan, in discussion with some young officers of the Staff College, the lines of his advance to Pretoria some considerable time before the spring of 1900.

If, therefore, the guardianship of the domestic virtue, which means, as I have said, the inviolability of our frontiers from attack, ought always to be before the mind of a soldier, you have to keep constantly in view those frontiers which are most vulnerable to attack.

It has been finely said that the frontiers of Great Britain are the shores of any country with which she happens to be at war.

That is an admirable application of the principle of the offensive-defensive in war; but I am not at this moment dealing with a frontier in that sense. I am asking you to think of the more obvious and salient fact that between Canada and the United States, between India and Asiatic Russia, and between Egypt and Asiatic Turkey, there are long lines of land frontier which England is bound and pledged to defend, as integral portions of the King's dominions.

Nothing is less probable than an armed conflict between Great Britain and the United States, nations knit together by close ties of blood and origin. But it must not be forgotten

that not fifty years ago the United States of America were torn in two by an interneceine struggle during which fathers and sons were ranged on different sides in battle.

I ask you also to think of the line of the North-West frontier, as it is rather vaguely, but most suggestively called, which roughly designates the points where our Empire is potentially vulnerable to attack.

There are many who hold that the defeat of Russia by Japan, and the internal troubles which supervened, have left the former power helpless for a generation. But historical experience points to a different conclusion. When we remember the militant spirit of France immediately following the crash of the Revolution, and the extraordinary recuperative power of that same nation within five years of the disaster of Sedan. As every one knows, in 1875—so soon after the terrible losses of the Franco-German war, and the payment of a huge indemnity, France had recovered to a point which inclined Prince Bismarck to contemplate a second invasion, before his enemy, which he had thought was crushed for a generation at least, had developed renewed and dangerous strength on the German frontier.

What security is there that in a few short years Russia may not have completely thrown off in a military sense the effects of the late

war? The Japanese—if the recent increase to their military forces may be taken as an indication of their opinion—are under no illusions on this head. That we have before us ten or twenty years of breathing time on the North-West frontier is a comfortable hypothesis, and tempting to men who desire either to frame low estimates of expenditure, or are unwilling to face unpleasant facts, but it is, at the same time, a dangerous hypothesis, and altogether unworthy of a practical business people.

To rely altogether for territorial security, upon foreign alliances on the one hand, or upon theories of immunity from attack on the other, is to ignore the lessons of the past.

These lessons are clear enough.

The only security which a nation has against attack, is to be strong enough to resist attack.

Again I want to remind you that a generation ago hardly any event appeared more improbable than a war between Great Britain, the greatest of all Mahomedan powers, and the head of the Mahomedan faith. Events, however, which were not foreseen, have given us another frontier, that of Egypt, which is conterminous with the dominions of the Sultan. A short time ago, under circumstances which are well within your memory, we were on the verge of a war with Turkey. Many men of acute understanding maintain that an invasion of Egypt across the



desert peninsula is an impossibility. History is full of examples of similar complacency. One example will suffice. It was the Austrian attitude in Northern Italy when Napoleon swept over the Alps; and Marengo was the commentary upon the word "impossible," which, in my humble judgment, no soldier should know how to spell.

From the remote ages of history until quite recent times, the tide of war has flowed across the Sinai Peninsula. The defence of Egypt is a new problem for us, but it is as real, and quite as urgent, as that Indian problem which for the past thirty years has received the thoughtful attention of every English officer who is a student of the art of war.

Although I have not spoken of a possible invasion of these shores by a hostile army, I should be sorry to be thought to be one of those who deliberately set aside such a possibility as unthinkable. It is sufficient to remember that Napoleon believed the invasion of Great Britain to be a feasible military operation, and that seventy years later the founder of modern German strategy deliberately planned it.

I have ventured to remind you of quarters from which the domestic virtue of our Empire might be imperilled, and I should like to say one word on the righteous laws which any soldier any day may be called upon to maintain.

That was, in reality, the function of the great force which left these shores for South Africa between 1899 and 1901. That was the duty which, in 1857, was very splendidly performed by British troops in India.

In an Empire so far reaching as ours, composed of such various races, and based upon such unequal distribution of wealth, it is work from which the soldier is divided by a very thin crust of what is called civilisation. The duty of maintaining domestic order throughout the vast cities of the Empire, and in many lands where the whites of our race are sparsely scattered among myriads of men alien in blood, differing in colour, and with wholly distinct ethical conceptions, rests on the British soldier. The warnings of history are very clear, and the volcanic ashes of insurrection are always slumbering, and most rarely become extinct. In 1857 the men who above all others helped to save India, and whose names are household words, were those who had studied the natives and their ways and their history, men like John Nicholson and Herbert Edwardes, and John Lawrence. It is too late, when the fires of civil war are lighted, to begin to study, in hastily bought handbooks, the probable conditions under which a fight for existence must be fought out.

Yet, to-day, at any moment, in North Africa,

or in the South, or once more on the plains of India, the righteous laws of our country may have to be maintained, under conditions not usually contemplated in the ordinary manuals of strategy or tactics. British officers, of every rank, and of all ages, may be suddenly called upon to take responsibilities, upon which many of them have never pondered, and to decide issues big with the fate of their countrymen and women, which, perhaps, a few months of careful historical study in time of peace would enable them to solve with conspicuous success.

Again, I want to remind you of the third duty, to which the writer I have quoted drew attention, that is to say, the endangering of our national honour.

The treaty with Japan is so notorious and so recent, that the responsibilities we incur under that treaty must be in the minds of every one. Their scope is very clearly defined, and it is comparatively simple to discover and consider them.

But the “Entente” with France also entails possible duties upon this nation, which are by no means so plain and obvious, and yet most clearly engage the honour of all of us. Closely connected with this “Entente” are our engagements to maintain the integrity of Belgium, and our ancient treaties with the kingdom of Portugal. A study of modern history reveals

the fact that the trend of growing empires in the twentieth century bears curious similarity to that of growing empires in the eighteenth or any previous century of which we possess historical record.

Although it may be westward, it is still more invariably seaward that the course of empire makes its way, slowly but surely.

Starting with this thesis, it is not difficult to conclude in what portion of the world's continents certain and inevitable struggles lie ahead for us. These are dangerous topics to speak of, as none of us desire to say unfriendly things of our neighbours, or to anticipate an evil day. But they are necessary topics of thought for every soldier, and of all subjects of study and meditation are likely to prove most fruitful to the individual soldier who realises their importance.

There are certain portions of Europe which have been the theatres of many wars. The phrase "the cockpit of Europe" is familiar to every one. Is it not well worth the while of every soldier to go over these old battle grounds, with the history of his forebears in his hand, and then to consider, by the light of recent political and social events, whether and, if so, what new conditions have supervened upon those under which the old struggles took place.

In a memorandum on theoretical instructions

on the art of war, recently issued to the army corps, by its commander - in - chief, Sir John French, lays stress, in some vital pages, upon the interpretation of the moral factors in war.

It would be an impertinence in me, as well as a vain attempt, were I to endeavour to put more clearly the point which he has there elucidated. I refer to it, merely because it bears so directly upon what I have been trying to say, and because the General quotes with approval the view of the Grecian biographer of Hannibal, that there is nothing more important for a soldier than to study the inclinations and character of his adversary. If I may be permitted to interpolate the word "possible" before the word "adversary," no stronger plea could be made for the study of modern history by every soldier.

When I read Sir John French's quotation and his memorandum, it reminded me of the description given by Plutarch and Livy of one of the ablest generals of antiquity. The passage from Livy is too long to quote, but its salient points are these: "He was a man eminent for his sagacity and experience in choosing ground and in leading armies; to which he formed his mind by perpetual meditation, in times of peace as well as war.

" When in any occasional journey he came to a straight difficult passage, if he was alone he considered with himself, and if he was in

company he asked his friends what it would be best to do if in this place they had found an enemy." Livy then goes on to explain in detail the various considerations, the character of the enemy, the nature of the country, questions of supply, of water, of camping grounds, of lines of retreat, which he would discuss, and concludes with these words: "With such thoughts and disquisitions he had from his early years so exercised his mind, that on these occasions nothing could happen which he had not been already accustomed to consider."

I should like to add that this reference does not show any profound study of the classics on my part, for the passage is most aptly quoted by one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all English painters, in one of his discourses to the students of the Royal Academy on the art of painting. It has thus a redoubled force, not only on its intrinsic merit, but from the fact that a great master of one of the finest of arts, thought it an admirable illustration of the method which every artist should employ to achieve success; and that this illustration was taken by him from the art of war, is not only a compliment to the profession of arms, but a striking lesson to every one of its votaries. It shows that in the opinion of a supreme artist technical skill alone will not suffice, but that knowledge founded upon observation, and followed by

reflection, are essential to success in art. Of all the arts, that of war is the most complex, and I offer you the suggestion that of all the ingredients which go to form the mind and character of an artist in war, the study of modern history is not the least important.

If it should be conceded that the study of modern history is an essential part of the daily life of a soldier, and not less important than the study of the more technical side of his profession, the question naturally arises, how can modern history most practically and conveniently be studied?

I remember no remark which was of more personal service to me, than a few words used by the present Secretary of State for India, which I read years ago in his "Life of Richard Cobden." Speaking of that distinguished man, Mr Morley said that: "When he read a book, he read it as all reading should be done, with a view to life and practise, and not in the way of refined self-indulgence." Thucydides had very much the same idea when dedicating his "History of the Peloponnesian War"—"To those who desire to have a true view of what has happened, and of the like or similar things which in accordance with human nature will probably hereafter happen." What I think Thucydides and Mr Morley both meant was, that to read in, what may be called, the ordinary way, even with a

desire to accumulate some knowledge of facts, is of no practical use, unless it is coupled with an effort to apply what we read to the living facts around us.

In this connection, it is interesting to find that the Duke of Wellington told General Sir James Kennedy that even before he went to India, and throughout his life, he made it a rule to study by himself some hours every day, and, in describing his daily life, said that he rose at six and used to *write* till nine, when he had breakfast; that his business hours then lasted till three, when he would ride till six, return to dinner, and *write* again from nine till midnight. What I wish to draw attention to, is that the Duke does not use the word "read," but he states that he "wrote," during these hours of private study. And that is the first point which any soldier, desirous of studying modern history, should bear in mind, that a few written pages, of analysis or reflection, upon one chapter of a book, are worth more than reading volumes in what I have called the ordinary way.

Perhaps the best example of the most profitable method of reading history can be gathered from "Napoleon's *Précis* of the Wars of Turenne and Frederick the Great." He was in the habit of marking paragraphs and sometimes whole chapters in a volume, after which he would comment on them most carefully, illustrating

his comments by references to past examples, which he had obviously carefully looked up, or to future possibilities, upon which he had evidently long reflected.

When a lad at school reads history his effort must necessarily be limited to storing up a mass of facts which he will afterwards find useful as illustrations. He is not of an age, nor has he sufficient knowledge of practical affairs, to appreciate the illustrative value of the facts he gathers. If he is ambitious and intelligent, he hopes that some day all this dead knowledge will suddenly become alive. But the professional soldier who reads history, after the fashion of Napoleon, with a pencil and paper, and a determination to understand obscure passages, by looking up references, possesses a clue to the whole human movement. He is able at once to apply the facts of yesterday to those of to-day, and to those of to-morrow. This aptitude is his by reason of his age and experience, his knowledge of the world, and his intercourse with men of trained intelligence. At the same time, he may lack the habit of reflection, and of applying the Napoleonic or comparative method to his reading of a book. I confess that it is not an easy habit to acquire, but I suggest for your consideration that, without it, the study of strategy or tactics, and equally of modern history, is of little value to the practical soldier.

I remember once discussing these matters with a very distinguished General, and he put to me a most pertinent question. "What are the history books," he asked, "that amid all the mass of modern literature a busy professional man ought to read?" It would need more courage, I must admit, than I possess, to answer this question. But I think I can venture to suggest the kind of book which a professional soldier would find useful.

I should like to say at this point that I have always believed, contrary to the usual scholastic plan, in the great advantage of reading history backwards; of beginning, say, with the nineteenth century and working back to the age of the Cæsars. We should by this means get rid of a quantity of irrelevant matter. It is, to my thinking, a regretful fact that no competent historian should have adopted that method, and have attempted to write a history of the last two centuries in the form in which you see the pedigree of a Derby winner set out in the sporting papers, and I am glad to make any future historian a present of the idea. I say this, in order to explain and justify the suggestion that a professional soldier might do worse than to take Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort," or Morley's "Life of Mr Gladstone," as a text for the study of the history of the first period which I venture to think of

primary importance, that is to say the period embraced by the reign of Queen Victoria. I mention Mr Gladstone's Life, not with any ulterior political motive, adverse or favourable, but because it was a very long public life, almost covering the century.

To read these books without discriminating between what is merely historically interesting, and what is illustrative of possible work ahead of us, would be long and tedious. Much can be passed over lightly. But take, for instance, such a passage as this—"The root of the Eastern Question, as everybody almost too well knows, is the presence of the Ottoman Turks in Europe, their possession of Constantinople—that incomparable centre of Imperial power standing in Europe but facing Asia—and their sovereignty as Mahometan masters over Christian races." It might be thought that this passage refers to 1876 and the Bulgarian atrocity movement and the Russo-Turkish war. In point of fact, it has reference to the outbreak of the war in the Crimea. How surely, however, its meaning applies to the events of 1876, to the situation in Macedonia to-day, and to circumstances which might arise to-morrow.

If a reader, instead of passing lightly over that passage to the last page, were to ask himself—

1. What is the "Eastern Question," as

defined, let us say, by the writers in the “Encyclopædia Britannica”?

2. Why does Mr Morley call Constantinople “that incomparable centre of Imperial power?”

and—

3. Over what Christian races is the Mahometan a master?

he would be led into enquiries, not very tortuous ones, which would throw much light on the practical problem of the Near East to-day.

Merely to touch upon one of them, he would find that the subject Christian races of the Turk were, at that time, Bulgarians, Servians and Greeks. He would ask himself to what extent these races had since been emancipated, and by what means. He would enquire and learn, what so few of us really know, the present constitution, say, of Bulgaria, the names and personalities of her public men, the size and organisation of her army. He would recollect that only a few months back England despatched an ultimatum to Turkey, which might have led to war. And finally (if he adopted the Napoleonic method), he would write down, for future reference, the precautions to be taken, the dangers to be avoided, so far as he could forecast them, should this country, one of the greatest of Mahometan powers, find herself in

alliance with Bulgaria and opposed to the head of the Mahometan faith.

I am led on to quote another passage. It has reference to the month of July, 1870. On the 25th of that month the *Times* divulged the text of a projected agreement, dated three years back, between the French and Prussian Governments in five articles, including one showing that the incorporation of Belgium by France would not be objected to by Prussia. Mr Gladstone thereupon wrote to the most peace-loving of his colleagues, the late Mr Bright, a long letter, in which the following words occur: "But neither do we think it would be right, even if it were safe, to announce that we would in any case stand by with folded arms, and see actions done which would amount to a total extinction of public right in Europe." A few days earlier he had written to Mr Cardwell, and used these words: "What I should like is to study the means of sending 20,000 men to Antwerp with as much promptitude as at the Trent affair we sent 10,000 to Canada."

Here, again, what I have called the Napoleonic method, would induce a reader to ask the meaning of the words "public right in Europe" to the possible extinction of which Mr Gladstone alludes. He would thus be led to the guarantee of the integrity of Belgium, and the reasons

which prompted the British Government of the day to subscribe to that guarantee. He would inevitably come across the breakdown of the arrangements agreed to at the Congress of Vienna, in regard to the Netherlands, and the separation of Belgium from Holland, the causes of the disruption, the siege of Antwerp, and the peculiar characteristics of the Belgian and Dutch people. He would then ask himself what Mr Gladstone intended by the words "if it were safe," and he would inevitably be led backward to the views of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh as to the danger of allowing a neighbouring first-class Power to hold Antwerp, or the mouths of the Scheldt, and he would naturally pass to the possibilities and dangers of the future.

Our hypothetical student would remember how often the Low Countries have served as the battlefield of Europe, and he would forecast the possibility of joint action, on our part, with Belgians, or Dutch, or both. And yet, how few of our countrymen know the names of the characters of any living statesman in Belgium or Holland, or the name or character of their leading soldier, or even the characteristics and aspirations of their people. These latter considerations, so important if men are to be allies, and not less important if they are to be enemies, only the study of modern history can reveal.



This is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the passages I have quoted, but I am afraid I have wearied you. I have been drawn into this long discussion by an overwhelming sense of the magnitude of the task which a modern soldier is asked to perform. It is not surprising that the Japanese hold that seven years' apprenticeship is necessary for the youngest officer, and that no private soldier, however gallant or of high character, is sufficiently trained to justify his promotion for command.

In former days a great deal of gallantry and a little technical knowledge often led to the highest and most responsible posts. Modern war demands gallantry still, and dash, and quickness of eye and decision, but it is now realised that, above all, it demands thorough and well-grounded knowledge.

A soldier's profession has become the most difficult of all professions ; and it is not surprising that men of the highest mental calibre devote themselves to it, with the same ardour with which formerly they might have adopted, what are no longer accurately called the learned professions. It is no exaggeration to say that in these so-called learned professions, men, junior as well as senior, are forced to devote from eight to ten hours a day to the serious brain work of their business, assuming that a man is ambitious of personal success. Nowadays, the army is no exception to the rule.

To the public at large this is a comparatively novel conception of a soldier's career, and is bound to be accompanied by many changes in the conventional habits of the soldier's profession ; and in the light in which that profession is publicly regarded.

It may be thought by some that matters such as those we have been considering may be relegated to the General Staff of the Army, that is to say, to a body of specially selected and specially trained officers. If I may venture to say so, such a view would be a grave delusion.

No one can value more highly the uses of a trained General Staff, and in a humble way I have endeavoured for many years to support those who were struggling to develop that idea, and to give practical effect to it in our army. But I have never been convinced by the school of speakers and writers who have urged us to model our General Staff upon the plan of Nations, however pre-eminent in war, whose conditions of military service and whose national habits are wholly different from ours.

It should never be forgotten that the German General Staff had its origin in the necessities of the higher command in the German confederation, and that the higher command was vested, as it could hardly fail to be under a confederate or federal system, in personages not selected solely for their capacity as leaders in the field.

The German General Staff has since developed, in a great degree accidentally, into an engine for war of the first importance.

But the British officer, as I have before remarked, from the most senior to the most junior, is liable to be placed in positions of responsibility, owing to the exigencies of our Imperial rule, wholly different from, and far greater than, those which any German is ordinarily asked to occupy. The situations in which a German officer is likely to find himself in war, are imaginable and limited. On the other hand, so varied are the duties of a British officer, and so world-wide is the sphere in which he moves habitually, that the power of dealing with unforeseen situations is for him almost a necessary attribute.

To train a body of men, endowed with special aptitudes, and selected for that reason, in the highly technical duties of the staff, and to give them special preparation for the part which a general staff must play in modern war, is not only desirable but vitally necessary to success in the field against highly-trained foreign troops. But it would be a bad day for England if this necessary condition of modern war were to induce the great body of British officers to suppose that outside the circle of the General Staff, education, and reflective habits of mind counted for nothing, or were considered superfluous.

History is full of examples of the tremendous responsibilities, and fateful decisions, which have been necessarily undertaken by British officers of all ranks in all parts of the world. Few stories are better known than that of the illuminating telegram sent in May, 1857, to the commander-in-chief in India, by two of the young men whose clear-sightedness and decisive action saved the Punjab, and helped to save India. It was typical of the discerning knowledge of native history and native character which so many of the younger officers possessed at that time, and which contributed so much to the successful quelling of the Mutiny.

Few decisions have entailed graver consequences (and I am not for a moment questioning its soundness) than when Sir George White determined to hold Ladysmith. My point is, that a decision so momentous, and not made on purely military grounds, but on general grounds of Imperial policy, would rarely come in the way of a German officer. Yet any officer, among those who hear me, might, ere his career ends, be called upon, in the ordinary course of his duty, to come unaided to a decision of almost equal gravity.

It is upon this consideration that I have founded a plea for the careful and reflective study of modern history, for a study—in the words I have quoted before—of—“What has happened, and of the like or similar things which

in accordance with human nature will probably hereafter happen."

A short time ago in Edinburgh an address was delivered by Mr Haldane to the students of the University, of which he is Lord Rector. The subject of that discourse was what he called the "Dedicated Life," a fine phrase of which I envy him the felicitous paternity. By this he explained that he meant that life should be a dedication—the dedication of the best of which a man is capable to the best and highest of which he is conscious. I know Mr Haldane well, and although he was addressing University students, who were fitting themselves for every sort of career, I feel little doubt that, subconsciously, his eloquent words were deeply influenced by the life of the soldier with which at this moment he is brought into such close contact.

I have tried to put before you, I hope not too didactically, a few considerations conceived in the spirit and sense of that discourse.

I am aware of the large place which military history and strategical studies fill in the training of officers for higher commands.

But, with great diffidence, I have endeavoured to suggest that, especially in relation to practical problems of to-day, whether foreign, colonial or domestic, modern history, in its broadest aspect, is the true school of generalship, and an essential matter for careful reflection in the "Dedicated Life" of every British officer.

VI

QUEEN VICTORIA'S JOURNALS¹

SOME UNPUBLISHED EXTRACTS

IT has been said that the characteristic of English Monarchy is that it retains the feelings by which the heroic kings governed their rude age, and has added the feelings by which the Constitutions of later Greece ruled in more refined ages. Possibly this idea might have been expressed in more elegant language, but the idea itself is sound and true. Our system of government—Constitutional Monarchy—is a happy blending of the personal influence of an hereditary rule with the organised expression of popular opinion. The will of the majority is the decisive factor, but it is subject to the indirect guidance of a monarchical sentiment acting and reacting through the person of the Sovereign.

Few things are more difficult to explain than the precise value and force of the influence of the Crown in public affairs. Perhaps there is

¹ A lecture entitled "Queen Victoria" delivered by Lord Esher at the Royal Institution on Friday, 5th March, and published in the *Times* of Saturday, 6th March 1909.

no advantage in trying to elucidate the mystery, for it is to an atmosphere of mystery, to the unrent veil between the Crown and the People, that the influence of the Sovereign upon national policy is largely due. I am not generalising, but am speaking of England—of our country—and of the times in which we are living. It is a fact that thoughtful men did not always look with favour upon the mystery of which I have spoken. Mr Fox declaimed against the hidden influence of George III., as the undetected agency of “an infernal spirit.” Later on, however, a great change occurred, and forty years ago wise and liberal-minded politicians were in the habit of saying with reverence: “*We* shall never know, but when history is written our children may know what we owe to the Queen and Prince Albert.” This attitude of faith towards the beneficent influence of the Sovereign power was a new thing, unregarded by the statesmen of the House of Hanover. History, as the secrets of the past three decades slowly leak out in memoirs and correspondence, has revealed this Royal influence working backwards and forwards, like a shuttle, through the slowly forming web of our political fabric, undetected at the time, but largely responsible for the harmonious colouring of the whole. The published correspondence of Queen Victoria has carried onward the curious story a further

stage. No one can read the volumes printed last year, by leave of the King, and fail to perceive that men forty years ago were right, and that the nation owes a heavy debt of gratitude to the Queen and Prince Albert. I approach the consideration of these volumes with much diffidence.

It has always appeared to me that the true significance of any historical work is to be found in what—for want of a better designation—must be called atmosphere. Few have been able to create it. The most famous prose writer of ancient Greece, with light touches and in half a dozen lines, carries the reader straight into the palaestra at Athens, and you seem to feel the hot summer sun beating down upon the play-grounds, and can see the teachers seated on the low benches, and the white-robed scholars grouped round them. The greatest of English poets has made the Forest of Arden as real to us as the Forest of Windsor—and to many men, as to the first Duke of Marlborough, the only history that is really alive is Shakespeare's. Dumas the Elder and Sir Walter Scott possessed this magical gift, while among living Englishmen, if a master-writer of history has been lost in George Meredith, perhaps lovers of literature have been the gainers because he chose another field. These supreme artists, as I have said, could create atmosphere, and the mere mention

of their names shows the hopelessness of the task before me.

I shall, however, make no serious attempt, for by the gracious leave of His Majesty the King I am enabled to quote certain passages from the unpublished journals of the Queen which will create for us that atmosphere which, as I have said, is so essential to the true understanding of character and of events. Before proceeding further I should like to state concisely the questions which readers of the correspondence of Queen Victoria should set before themselves, and seek to answer: What do we owe to Queen Victoria? What was the secret of her influence? What will be her place in history? I cannot pretend to answer them, but we can perhaps proceed some little way together along the path which leads to their ultimate solution.

On the day, the 24th of May 1832, that the little Princess Victoria was thirteen years old, her life, as described by herself, began. As described by herself, because on that day her mother gave the child a small octavo volume, half-bound in red morocco, with the words "Princess Victoria" stamped on the side. The first entry is as follows:—

"This book Mama gave me, that I might write the journal of my journey to Wales in it.
—VICTORIA."

From this time forward, in volumes which, as years rolled on, varied much in shape, but were uniform in so far as the pages were invariably plain and unruled, the Princess and Queen wrote the account of every day until within a few weeks of her death. Of the Queen's journals there are altogether over 100 volumes, all closely written in her small running hand. The last entry is dictated and dated the 12th of January, and the Queen died on the 22nd of January 1901. When Louis XIII. of France was born the medical attendant of Queen Marie of Medicis began to keep a journal, in which he recorded day by day for years—until, indeed, the hour of the King's death—his master's life. That journal, the most minute I know of, is a poor and meagre record compared with the journals of Queen Victoria.

Perhaps it is well here to mention that these journals will never be seen hereafter in their entirety. By the Queen's express wish they have been carefully examined by her youngest daughter, who with infinite labour has copied in her own hand many volumes of them, excising the passages which the Queen desired should not be seen by any eye but hers. Still, when this pious work is complete, the story of a Royal and noble life will be without any parallel. All the earlier journals, certainly up to the date of the Queen's marriage, and during that year she

began her 24th volume, are untouched, and remain in her own handwriting.

Imagine the small, fair child, fatherless and companionless, except for her devoted mother, and her "Faithful Lehzen," as she always called the lady who watched over her youth, sitting at the window of a rather plain room in Kensington Palace, on those June days in 1832. The echoes of the great Reform controversy raging out of doors failed to penetrate those quiet precincts as she wrote her first entries in these journals.

Here is the account she gives of a day of her life. As I have said, I am allowed to quote by permission of His Gracious Majesty the King :—

"Thursday, 21st February, 1833. I awoke at 7 and got up at 8. At 9 we breakfasted. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 came the Dean till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11. At 10 minutes to 12 we went to pay a visit to Aunt Gloucester. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 we lunched. At 2 came the Duchess of Northumberland. At 3 came Mr Steward till 4. At 4 came Mad. Bourdin till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4. At 7 we dined. At 9 we went to the play to Drury Lane, with Jane, Victoire and Lehzen as usual. It was *The Sleeping Beauty* or *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, for we came at the end of *Don Juan*. The Sleeping Beauty is a very pretty ballet, in three acts, but it would take me too much time to enumerate. The principal characters were Princess Iseult, Mdlle. Duvernay, who is a very nice person; she has a very fine figure and

dances beautifully, so quietly and so gracefully, somewhat in the style of Taglioni. She appeared in three different dresses, but in my opinion she looked best when she danced in the Dance of the NAIADES as the Spirit of the Princess. We came home at 1. I was soon in bed and asleep."

The writer was thirteen and a half years old. For five years this daily record continues, and we have a simple and extraordinarily graphic picture of a young girl, whose high destiny was but half revealed to her, enjoying the theatre and fine music with passion, galloping about on her pony, reading history with the Dean of Chester, washing her pet dog, and making short abstracts of the sermon on Sunday.

Here is another typical passage:—

"Tuesday, 14th July, 1835.—I awoke at 7 and got up at 8. At 9 we breakfasted. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 we walked out till a $\frac{1}{4}$ past 10. At 11 came the Dean till 12. At 12 came Mr Westall till 1. At 1 we lunched. The Duchess of Northumberland was present at the first lesson. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2, I sat to Mr Collen till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3. At a $\frac{1}{4}$ to 4 came the Dean, till $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4. At 5 we went out with Lehzen and came home at 6. At $\frac{1}{4}$ to 7 we dined. Lady Theresa dined here. At 8 we went to the opera with Lady Theresa and Lehzen. It was the *dear Puritani*. Grisi was in perfect voice and sang and acted *beautifully*; but I must say, that she shows her many fatigues in her face, and she is certainly much thinner than when she arrived. It is a great pity, too, that she now wears her front

hair so much lower than she did. It is no improvement to her appearance, though (do what she may) *spoil* her face she *never* can, it is too lovely for that. And besides, she forgot to change her dress when she came on to sing the Polacca. In general she comes on to sing that, as a bride, attired in a white satin dress with a wreath of white roses round her head; instead of which, she remained in her first dress (likewise very pretty) of blue satin with a little sort of handkerchief at the back of her head. Lablache, Tamburini and Rubini were also all 3 in high good voice. The exquisite quartet 'A te o cara,' and the *lovely* Polacca 'son vergin vezzosa,' were both enchored as was also the *splendid* duet 'Il rival.' After the opera was over, Grisi, Rubini, Lablache, and Tamburini, came out and were loudly applauded. The two last always make a separate bow to our box, which is very amusing to see. We came away immediately after the Opera was over, for the ballet is not worth seeing since La Déesse de la Danse has flown back to Paris again. She appeared for the last time on Saturday, the 4th of this month. We came home at 10 minutes to 12. I was *highly amused* and *pleased!* We came in while Tamburini was singing his song, which is just before the lovely duet between Grisi and Lablache."

Then suddenly this young girl was awakened out of sleep, and found an Archbishop kneeling at her slippers feet, acclaiming her Queen. The passage is well known, and is published in the correspondence:—

"I was awoke at 6 o'clock by Mama, who

told me that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here and wished to see me. I got out of bed, and went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing gown) and alone, and saw them."

A few lines further on she writes :—

"Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country; I am very young, and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have."

Then again, writing the account of this, to her, most wonderful day, she says:—

"At 9 came Lord Melbourne, whom I saw in my room, and of course quite alone, as I shall always do all my Ministers. He kissed my hand, and I then acquainted him that it had long been my intention to retain him and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs, and that it could not be in better hands than his. He again then kissed my hand."

The Queen was eighteen years and three weeks old. There had been potent forces at work moulding her character, and preparing her for this supreme moment. Three weeks before she writes in her unpublished journal :—

"Wednesday, 24th May.—To-day is my 18th birthday! How old! and yet how far am I from being what I should be. I shall from this day take the *firm* resolution to study with

renewed assiduity, to keep my attention always well fixed on whatever I am about, and to strive to become every day less trifling and more fit for what, if Heaven wills it, I'm some day to be!"

Here is another extract:—

"Thursday, 15th June.—Got up at 8. After 9 we breakfasted. The children played in the room. At 10 Mary, dear Lehzen and I drove out and came home at 10 minutes to 11. *Wrote*!! The news of the King are so very bad, that all my lessons save the Dean's are put off, including Lablache's, Mrs Anderson's, Guazzaroni's, etc., etc., and we see *nobody*. I regret rather my singing-lesson, though it is only for a short period, but duty and *proper feeling* go before all *pleasures*. 10 minutes to 1.

"I just hear that the Doctors think my poor Uncle the King cannot last more than 48 hours! Poor man! he was always kind to me, and he *meant* it well I know; I am grateful for it, and shall ever remember his kindness with gratitude. He was odd, very odd and singular, but his intentions were often ill interpreted.

"Wrote my journal. At about $\frac{1}{4}$ past 2 came Lord Liverpool and I had a highly important conversation with him—alone."

And yet another.

"Friday, 16th June.—Wrote to Uncle Leopold. At a quarter past 2 came Stockmar and stayed till 3. Had a long and important conversation with him."

Her Uncle Leopold of Belgium and his trusted emissary Stockmar had spoken very privately,

but very gravely to her, and with due subser-
vience to the Powers of Heaven, but to none
other, she was ready to take up the burden
of Kingship, and with *her* Ministers to govern
her Kingdom.

Two days after her Accession the journals
strike a more girlish note:—

“ Saturday 24th June.—Saw Lord John
Russell. *Wrote.* I really have immensely to
do; I receive so many communications from
my Ministers but I like it very much.”

Three days later the young Queen writes with
evident and confirmed delight:—

“ Tuesday, 27th June.—Got up at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8.
At $\frac{1}{4}$ to 10 we breakfasted. The children played
in the room. Wrote my journal. At about
20 minutes past 11 came Lord Melbourne and
stayed till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12.

“ A little after $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12 came Lord Palmerston
and stayed till a little past 1. He is a clever and
agreeable man. Saw Lord John Russell and
Lord Melbourne for a minute. At a few minutes
past 2 I went down into the saloon with Lady
Lansdowne; Col. Cavendish, the Vice-Chamber-
lain (Lord Charles Fitzroy), and the Comptrol-
ler of the Household (Mr Byng) were in
waiting. Lord Melbourne then came in and
announced that the addresses from the House
of Commons were ready to come in. They
were read by Lord John Russell and I read an
answer to them both. Lord Melbourne stood on
my left hand and Lady Lansdowne behind me.
Most of the Privy Counsellors of the House of
Commons were present. After this Lord

Palmerston brought in the Earl of Durham, who is just returned from St Petersburg. I conferred on him the Grand Cross of the Bath. I knighted him with the Sword of State which is so enormously heavy that Lord Melbourne was obliged to hold it for me, and I only inclined it. I then put the Ribbon over his shoulder. After this the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers were severally introduced to me by Lord Palmerston. I then went upstairs and gave audiences to the Earl of Mulgrave and to the Earl of Durham. The latter gave a long account of Russia.

"Did various things. Saw Stockmar. As I did not feel well I did not come down to dinner, but dined upstairs. I went down after dinner. Stayed up till 10. I wore the blue Ribbon and Star of the Garter in the afternoon."

In this land, and keeping the doctrines of the Revolution of 1688, and the Act of Settlement in remembrance, we may be sure that the young Queen had no illusions about "Divine right" to rule, but it is clear at this time that she was conscious of a wonderful and mysterious duty which had been imposed upon her by Divine Providence, and this conscientious obligation remained in her mind all her days. Dogma had but little place in her inner life, but her character and conduct as Sovereign and woman were influenced by deep religious conviction of the sacredness of her calling. She believed and acted upon the belief that her country was governed under the form of a Monarchy, of

which she was not only the spiritual and temporal head, but the appointed guardian, and through all her actions this predominant note can be traced. Mr Canning was in the habit of saying that the British Constitution was a Monarchy checked by two Assemblies, one hereditary, independent alike of Crown and people; the other elective, springing from the people; "but," he said, "there are some who argue as if it were originally a democracy, merely inlaid with a peerage and a Crown."

Queen Victoria had no doubts and no misgivings about the matter. Through the close-written volumes of journals to which I have alluded there can be traced this firm conviction, unchallenged, as it seemed to her, that it was *her* duty and function to choose the best men to govern her country and her people, and to watch carefully lest in foreign affairs or domestic politics, or in administration or in legislature, or in the choice of instruments, her Ministers — as she deemed them — should betray her confidence or swerve from the paths of their predecessors. She laid strong stress on precedent, and although she rarely expressed views on domestic affairs, she believed herself to be responsible for continuity in the forms of government and for stability in foreign policy.

There are in the Archives at Windsor, of which I have charge, 1,050 volumes of papers, the

correspondence of Queen Victoria, bound in large folio volumes, and there will be another 200 volumes to be added when the arrangement of these papers is complete. Through them all, from the earliest letters to and from Lord Melbourne, some of which have been included in the book published last year, to the last letters to and from Lord Salisbury, there appears the sentiment and convictions I have described. The Queen, with unconscious heroism, not only was always herself, but thoroughly believed in herself, as Sovereign of these Realms. From the passages I have quoted it can be seen how thoroughly, as a young girl—almost a child—she “took herself seriously,” to use a homely phrase, and her point of view never changed as time rolled on. On the very day of her Accession, and ever afterwards, she never seemed to doubt that the country was *hers*, that the Ministers were her Ministers, and that the people were *her* people. Ministers and Parliament existed to assist *her* to govern. She was the Ruler of her Kingdom, and the Crown was, in her eyes, not the coping-stone of the fabric, but the foundation upon which the fabric rested.

This outlook, with its pathetic earnestness, and at times almost tragic persistence, was the source of the Queen's influence, and sometimes the cause of her few mistakes. It helped her to

safeguard the regal tradition, and it enhanced in her eyes the virtue of precedent. She became cautious in the selection of confidants, and wary in granting assent. She wished to know everything that her Ministers proposed to do in good time, so that she might consider before approving. She became insatiable for detail. In foreign affairs, and whenever interests affecting the Navy or the Army were under discussion, she expected to be consulted, and indeed insisted upon it. The Prince Consort, with that intense earnestness that breathed through every fibre of his nature, became her willing partner and helpmate. Undoubtedly to the influence of Baron Stockmar, who had been the travelling companion of Prince Albert, and who showed himself to be a profound student of English social and political life, can be traced these convictions, so strongly held by the Queen and by the Prince.

King Leopold and Stockmar, and the Prince Consort later, and the Queen apparently always, believed that control and independent criticism by the Crown was the most effective check upon the danger which besets Constitutional Monarchies of leaving the administration of State affairs in the hands of specialists. From the critical zeal of the Queen and of the Prince Ministers occasionally suffered inconvenience, but, as these volumes, I think, show, the country



derived nothing but benefit. And if this is true, it is a lesson for all time, both for Sovereigns and for public servants.

The correspondence of Queen Victoria illustrates in a striking manner the working of our curious system of constitutional checks and balances. After the death of Mr Pitt in 1806 it is well known that the power and influence of the Crown began to decline, and when the Queen came to the Throne in 1837 no one could have realised that within two years Sir Robert Peel of all men, a spirit so proud and cold, would find himself saying to a young girl not yet twenty years old, "that he had consulted with those who were to have been his colleagues, and that they agreed . . . that unless there was *some* demonstration" of confidence, they could not undertake to govern the country. This Queen was a mere child, and these were grave men. Imagine the irony of the situation; and yet it is a material factor in the history of our country. The Queen in later years used to speak of the episode of 1839, the Bedchamber Plot, as was called her well-known refusal to part with her Whig ladies, when Sir Robert Peel tried to form a Tory Government, and she used to say that although she knew she had acted wrongly, she had never been able to determine what, under the circumstances, would have been the right course to take. The Queen's action, the action of this

young girl, resulted in the return of Lord Melbourne to office, so curiously was the power of the Crown directly and effectively exercised by a youthful and female Sovereign. Possibly her youth and sex accounted somewhat for the result.

Here is the Queen's description of the matter :—

“When to my utter astonishment he asked me to change my Ladies—my principal Ladies! —this I of course refused; and he upon *this resigned*, saying, as he felt he should be beat the very first night upon the Speaker, and having to begin with a minority, that unless he had this demonstration of my confidence he could not go on! You will easily imagine that I firmly resisted this attack upon my power, from these people who pride themselves upon upholding the prerogative! I acted quite alone, but I have been, and shall be, supported by my country. . . .”

The point which I wish particularly to bring out is that the Crown exercised in this case real power by direct action, although in later years the Queen realised, with profounder wisdom and after a long experience, that the real power of the Crown lies along the path of influence and not of direct action. But perhaps the most striking and abiding interest is the light which is thrown upon the character of the Queen herself. Already she had learnt the use of the words “power” and “prerogative.” She

shows courage and confidence, courage to "act quite alone" and "confidence in my country." These two qualities of courage and confidence never deserted her through the long years that followed.

In the dismal Crimean winter of 1854, in the terrible summer of 1857, amid the horrors of the Mutiny, in the dark days of 1900, amid the losses of brave troops, her high spirit was unshaken and her confidence undimmed. Others quailed, but the Queen never. She scouted the idea of failure. "All will come right!" was her constant cry. There was nothing fatalistic about her optimism. It was based on profound faith in the reasonableness and endurance of the English people—characteristics which she shared with those Puritan classes whom she so thoroughly understood, and who never once misunderstood her.

Let us return for a moment to the influence of the Crown upon English politics. The character of the Queen is a factor of the greatest importance if the contention is sound that it was her influence, rather than her direct action, as Sovereign which revived the interest of the British people in monarchical institutions and in a certain degree remoulded the Constitution. "In England the Constitution changes incessantly; or rather, it does not exist." That was the view of an eminent French writer, often quoted, and

in the hundred years which elapsed between the accession of the Queen's grandfather, George III., and the death of the Prince Consort, a student of constitutional history can trace at least three different systems of government. George III. during his healthy and vigorous manhood reigned and governed. After the death of Mr Pitt the Government passed under the control of an oligarchy, and neither George IV. nor William IV. exercised much direct or indirect power.

But I think the correspondence shows that from the moment Queen Victoria ascended the Throne a change began, and the indirect power of the Crown, with the assistance of King Leopold and Stockmar, and finally of the Prince Consort, was strengthened year by year, until publicists came to believe that what was in reality the outcome of unique circumstances, and moral conditions dependent mainly upon the sex and characteristics of the Queen, was inherent in the Constitution itself. It was Mr Gladstone who pointed out how considerable in amount was "the aggregate of direct influence normally exercised by the Sovereign upon the counsels and proceedings of her Ministers." He was alluding to the direct influence of the Queen, and not to her indirect influence, which he well knew was greater still.

Mr Gladstone's language, according to his

habit, was guarded, but he was making no reluctant admission. Although during his long public life, especially in later years, he was often impeded, and, he may have sometimes thought, harassed, by the desire of the Sovereign to know and to question, he was to the end of his days fully alive to the valuable influence of the Crown in public affairs, and always anxious to safeguard the prerogatives of the Sovereign. "In office or in Opposition," says his biographer, "he lost no opportunity of standing forth between the Throne and even a faint shadow of popular or Parliamentary discontent." Nor, it may be added, did he hesitate to appeal for support, as in the case of Irish Disestablishment, to the influence of the Queen; nor, as in the case of the abolition of purchase in the Army, did he shrink from advising the use of her prerogative.

If Mr Gladstone, with his popular sympathies, his masterful disposition, and his wide experience of public affairs, considered it one of his special duties as Prime Minister, as distinguished from his Cabinet, to watch and guard the relations between the Crown and the people of this country, it can only have been because he was keenly alive to the value of the Crown to the country. If, as has been said, he stood in awe of the Crown as an institution, and if his standard for the individual who

represented it was exacting, it could only have been because he shared the Queen's fervent belief in the essential good which the Throne and the occupant of it could exercise in the interests of the people. I do not choose Lord Melbourne to bear witness to the character of Queen Victoria, or to the uses of the Crown, for Lord Melbourne was too much under the charm of the young girl, whose early steps, she herself has told us, he guided, and whom he cherished, if the word is permissible, as a father might a daughter. He could never quite forget the figure of the girl-Queen, stepping, as it were, from innocent sleep, with bare feet and dazzled eyes, upon the slippery steps of her Throne.

I do not choose Lord Beaconsfield, for just as the imagination of the author of "A Letter on a Regicide Peace" was inflamed by a glimpse of the French Queen at Versailles, so was the imagination of the author of "Tancred" fired in 1877 by the Empress-Queen, of whom forty years before he had written: "We will acknowledge the Empress of India as our Suzerain, and secure for her the Levantine Coast. If she like, she shall have Alexandria as she now has Malta: it could be arranged. Your Queen is young; she has an *avenir*." Never was there a more curious example of a statesman who "wrought in brave old age what youth had

planned." I choose Mr Gladstone because he was a Minister of the Crown three years before Queen Victoria ascended the Throne, and his death preceded hers by less than three years; because his long life coincided with hers, and because, as is well known, there was no great sympathy at any time between what has been so deftly called the Queen's fixity of nature and Mr Gladstone's eager, mobile, versatile range.

On one occasion, at the most tragic moment of the Queen's life, in December, 1861, it is true that for a short while these two unsympathetic temperaments came into close harmony.

Of the vast number of letters of condolence received by the Queen on the death of the Prince, all of which were carefully preserved, she must have conceived some preference for Mr Gladstone's, as it is noteworthy that he was the only writer who received a reply begging him to write again. But this was a mere flash. If Mr Gladstone idealised the Throne as an institution, and if he recognised the Queen's sincerity, frankness, and love of truth, his judgment may be accepted as unswayed by intimate association with the Sovereign. If he spared neither time nor toil in endeavours to explain his policy and actions to the Queen, it was not from motives of personal devotion, so much as because he felt deeply, to use his own words, that those responsible for decisions of

State "should make it their business to inform and persuade the Sovereign, not to overrule him."

If Mr Gladstone's masterful nature, charged with popular sympathies, thought it worth while to give time and toil to the task of informing and persuading the Sovereign, it could only have been from a strong sense of the value to the people of this country of the Throne as an institution. His biographer suggests that Mr Gladstone was deeply moved by his sense of chivalry and his sense of an august tradition, and I would not venture to disagree; but I feel confident that Mr Gladstone was also largely influenced by his long Ministerial experience and his intimate knowledge of the inner working of the Constitution. If that is true, and if Mr Gladstone's formed judgment was based on fact and experience, it is justified by much of what has been revealed in the published correspondence of Queen Victoria.

But there is even stronger proof at present unrevealed, for it was after 1861, when the published correspondence closes, that, owing to the responsibilities of high office and personal intercourse, he obtained a deeper knowledge of the inner workings of the Monarchical system under our institutions, and a firmer basis for his reasoned opinions. The story, however, as it is unfolded to the reader of the Queen's

Letters, illustrated clearly Mr Gladstone's so-called "idealism," and explains his point of view. Only a very few instances can be quoted. These do not show—and this is a cardinal point—initiation by the Sovereign of foreign policy, or attempts to divert into some special political channel the course of public events. There are no signs of doctrinaire statecraft, or claims to authority or privilege. They do, however, illustrate, in clear and unmistakable fashion, the most important attributes, the retarding and arresting action of the Crown.

As I have said, the Queen very rarely took what is called political initiative. That function, so clearly Ministerial, was as a rule left scrupulously alone, although in the free domain of science and art the Prince Consort showed a stimulating zeal and a marked capacity for originating new departures. The first of the great series of International Exhibitions was promoted by him, and the success achieved was mainly due to his persistence and unwearied activity of mind and body. But if the Queen rarely initiated a policy, she could be pertinacious and consistent. Many times during her long reign she encouraged the flagging energies of her Ministers, and urged them to be consistent in their aims and to show firmness in carrying out a policy to which they had committed the nation.

In another important sphere of government

she showed unremitting care. She scrutinised the exercise of patronage by public servants, and no appointment of serious importance, whether ecclesiastical, naval, military, or civil, could be made unchallenged by and unexplained to the Sovereign. The comparative inaccessibility of the Crown to ordinary influence was realised by the Queen, and her letters, full of heart-searching upon these matters of patronage, show how keenly alive she was to the nature of the trust she believed herself to hold for her people. Every appointment had to be explained and justified, sometimes at considerable length and in minute detail, by the Minister recommending it.

The Queen rarely approved a "submission" unless the reasons were fully stated, and often they had to be re-stated, and oftener supplemented, in consequence of queries from the Palace. In September, 1841, when the Queen was only two-and-twenty years old, she is found suggesting to Sir Robert Peel that

"for the future it would be best in all appointments of importance that before a direct communication was entered into with the individual intended to be proposed, The Queen should be informed of it, so that she might talk to her Ministers fully about it";

and she tells Sir Robert that "she feels it her duty to state freely and at all times her opinion," and begs him to do the same. It is clear that,

young as she was, the Queen's expression of opinion was welcomed by Peel and Melbourne, as a support against pretensions which they found difficult to resist, but it is also clearer that they both welcomed the clarifying process of having to explain and argue the claims of candidates for high appointments before so unbiassed a tribunal. In the process the patience of a Minister may often have been tried, but the value to the service of the people, of a system which rendered jobbery difficult and imposture unlikely, cannot well be over-estimated.

The advice of King Leopold to the Queen on her Accession had been never to decide a question of importance on the day when it was submitted to her. He, wise ruler as he was, had made it a practice not to let any question be forced upon him for immediate decision. Even, he writes to the Queen, when he was disposed to accede he always kept the papers with him some while before he returned them. He urged her to get every proposal laid before her in writing, though it had been made in the first instance verbally by a Minister.

This golden rule, reiterated by Stockmar and enforced by the Prince Consort, was invariably adhered to by Queen Victoria to the end of her life, and we may safely attribute to the habit thus formed the avoidance of many mistakes, not only by her, but by her Ministers. In the

year 1841, a year of momentous change for the Queen, when she lost Lord Melbourne, her first Prime Minister, we find him, after his resignation, urging Sir Robert Peel to write fully to her Majesty, and elementarily; and he again lays stress on the necessity for caution in giving verbal decisions. It was similar advice to that offered by King Leopold, but from a wholly different quarter, not from the point of view of a Monarch, but of a Minister. The underlying reason was the same. It was to ensure the clarifying process, and the avoidance of avoidable error by Minister and Sovereign.

If the remarkable correspondence between Lord Beaconsfield and the Queen is ever published, nothing will be found to be more striking than the minute care with which he, notwithstanding his perspicacity and infinite resource, reasoned and debated in daily letters and memoranda the successive stages of his foreign policy. No one can read those documents without conviction that they were written quite as much for his own enlightenment as for that of the Sovereign. Mr Gladstone paid even a higher tribute to the value of this invaluable function of the Crown by the care he bestowed upon the letters written to the Queen, when he was almost overwhelmed by the pressure of a controversy such as that which raged over the Disestablishment of the Irish Church.

Every reader of the correspondence will, I think, be even more forcibly struck by the effect of this process in the higher sphere of foreign politics, where the interests of the country were vitally concerned, as exemplified in the long and grave disputes between the Crown, Lord Palmerston, and Lord John Russell. It would be wearisome to unravel once more these old controversies, even if anything was to be gained by attempting to decide upon their merits. It is sometimes asserted that the Queen never carried her point, and that she invariably in the end had to give way. Even if this were true it would be a misleading statement—if the deduction is that the remonstrance was in vain and the time wasted. The discussion was the important thing—discussion in an atmosphere free from political dust-clouds, whichever way the issue was decided.

Readers of the correspondence cannot fail to notice a certain aristocratic showiness—I was about to say vulgarity—about Lord Palmerston's methods, which in those days captivated his fellow-countrymen. But they lowered him and the cause of freedom which he finely represented in the eyes of even his well-wishers abroad. Often the tone of his despatches was softened by the suggestions of the Queen and of the Prince. It was not the advice he gave, in his haughty way, to foreign Governments that moderate

men objected to, but his mode of giving it. If the Queen disliked his diplomatic style, she objected more to his studied withdrawal from her on certain occasions of a privilege highly prized—her right to see despatches on foreign policy before they were sent abroad.

To read despatches was no perfunctory duty for the Sovereign. It has seemed absurd to superficial observers that venerable statesmen of the highest ability—Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Lord Aberdeen—should have been constrained to submit grave State papers upon highly technical matters to a young Sovereign and her husband for criticism and approval. These harassed statesmen, perhaps momentarily irritated, may not have realised so fully as we realise now the importance which attached to a system which, by an indirect and circuitous method, enforced reconsideration rather than control, and obtained an appeal from the Foreign Secretary to the Prime Minister. Every one knows that in theory this check is ever present in a Cabinet. In practice, however, it very frequently lapses or is evaded.

To consult the Prime Minister before sending a despatch which might have determined the policy of the country was, in practice, at the option of the Foreign Secretary. Lord Palmerston sometimes consulted Lord John Russell, oftener he did not. But, oftener still, the Prime

Minister, worried by duties of Cabinet management, did not apply his mind except perfunctorily to what was primarily the business of a colleague. The useful clash of different minds upon affairs of capital importance was tacitly avoided, and consequently lost. It was in these cases, and they are many, when either from the Prime Minister's absorption in other work, or from his failure to grasp at hasty sight the full meaning of Lord Palmerston's phraseology, that the criticism or remonstrance of the Sovereign led always to reconsideration and almost invariably to amendment.

The value, the inestimable value, of the delay imposed by the Crown was not to obtain sanction for the view the Sovereign happened to express—that was not the vital issue—but to get the intellect of another statesman of first rank, and often of the whole Cabinet, applied to a problem which could not safely be left to be solved by a single mind.

There are many illustrations of this thesis scattered through the volumes of the Queen's Letters, not only in relation to foreign, but to domestic affairs. In every case the Sovereign was triumphant, if triumph is measured, not by the ultimate issue, but by the vindication of this sound principle—that the act of a single Minister should not be allowed to commit the country to a vital policy without the conscious

and reasoned adherence of his colleagues in the Cabinet. The ultimate decision was a minor consideration, compared with the principle of Cabinet responsibility as against individual Ministerial action.

For this the Queen fought steadily all her life. So watchful was she, that often we find her calling the attention of the Prime Minister of the day, not to the action, but to the speech of some colleague, who, in her view, appeared to compromise the responsibility of the Government as a whole by some unwary or unauthorised declaration. It was her opinion, expressed on many occasions, that if a Minister made speeches in the country, he should not outstep the limits of Cabinet agreement, and that he should not be permitted to pledge himself to a policy without at the same time pledging his colleagues. That the Queen was right in her interpretation of constitutional doctrine need not be argued, as every one of her Prime Ministers supported her view.

It may be thought that any Prime Minister of strong character and vigorous intellect would enforce these rules. Experience shows, however, that all Prime Ministers—Lord John Russell often, Lord Beaconsfield once or twice, Mr Gladstone frequently—are tempted to turn a blind eye towards a too impetuous colleague.

On the other hand, there is no example, in this correspondence, of a Minister not appreciating

with some relish the support against an unruly colleague which was offered him by the Sovereign.

Another point well worth noting is that the most careful scrutiny of the published and unpublished letters shows beyond dispute that the influence of the Crown was uniformly asserted in the interests of peace and against action which might lead to war. Although no one could show rarer determination when once the die was cast, and more firmness to reap the fruit of national sacrifices than the Queen, there is no instance in the whole of her reign where she can be shown to have favoured war, or encouraged those who were anxious for it. There are many to the contrary. Two will suffice.

It was largely due to the pertinacious support given by the Queen to those members of the Cabinet who in 1850 favoured peace that England was not dragged by Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell into the contest between Prussia and Denmark. It was an occasion when the sentiment of the country and the policy of a powerful Minister came into conflict, and no one, reading the inner history of that conflict of opinion, can doubt that the peaceful issue was largely determined by the action of the Queen. The non-intervention of Great Britain in 1850 was largely due to the joint endeavour of the Queen and the Prince Consort; and, later on,

it was to the infinite credit of the Prince that in 1861, at a moment of national heat and excitement, this country was saved from the crime of a war with the United States. The proofs of these statements are to be found in the volumes of the Queen's Correspondence.

We are not concerned, however, with the merits of these bygone controversies. The question as to which policy was right may still be argued. But we are concerned with the illustration afforded by the Queen of the effect of throwing the whole weight of the indirect influence of the Crown into the scale of peace. Had she acted otherwise the result would have been to cast doubt upon the institution of Monarchy, and possibly, at some period, to have jeopardised the Crown.

At this point may I pause for a moment to note once more the singular flexibility of our unwritten Constitution, and the ease and smoothness with which the relations between the Crown and a representative Government adjusted themselves to varying conditions? A young Queen exercises her doubtful prerogative with the support of a Liberal majority in a reformed House of Commons against a powerful Tory combination headed by Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington. What a paradox is here! A Liberal Prime Minister of great determination endeavouring to force a measure

of Irish Disestablishment through a Tory House of Lords appeals to the Sovereign for assistance, and achieves success through her mediation. What a confusion of democratic ideals is there! Institutions more hide-bound, less malleable, would not have stood the strain—and these volumes of the Queen's Correspondence contain lessons for all who, for the sake of symmetry, or abstract polity, or momentary convenience, may desire to substitute dogmatic restriction and a statutory formula for so flexible a medium of Government.

If I have made my meaning clear, the value of a Monarchical system like ours should be enhanced by a study of the Queen's Correspondence. Unqualified eulogy would be unworthy of our subject, and the last thing Queen Victoria would have desired. In her public capacity as Sovereign of these realms she occasionally committed errors of judgment; but not often. It would be vain to select examples either for praise or blame. We have been engaged upon an examination of causes and results, rather than upon a critical estimate of specific acts.

This, however, I should like to say. I have had exceptional opportunities of examining at first hand the inner history of a reign, extending over sixty years, during which every document was preserved—even the least important of

telegrams. It has been my duty to arrange this vast mass of political papers with as much care as I could devote to the task, and I can assert, with the fullest conviction, that I have found no trace of any grave mistake committed by the Queen in her capacity as Sovereign.

Perhaps the only serious error made by the Queen was her seclusion during the long period from 1861 to 1874—when she allowed her deep feelings as a woman to prevail against the claims made upon her as Head of the State. But these claims were of the lesser kind. The greater claims she met during those years in a degree which will only be fully realised, if it should become possible to publish a further selection of her correspondence during that period. She displayed none of the graver faults of the greatest of her predecessors on the Throne. Although often treated with ingratitude she never showed the resentment of Elizabeth. The cold indifference characteristic of William III. was foreign to her nature. Although she resembled in many ways her grandfather, George III., she could have been relied upon not to misunderstand the American Colonies.

It is necessary to speak of her private life—it was so bound up with her public life—and upon the connection between these her influence over her people mainly rested. At this point,

owing to His Majesty the King's gracious permission to quote from her Journals, the Queen has spoken and can speak for herself. I have known of no better way to bring home to you the deep underlying truth about Queen Victoria than to quote her own words, at different and characteristic periods of her life.

The passages I have quoted were not intended when they were written for any eye but hers. It was only many, many years later, when confronted with fabulous statements about herself and her family, which had obtained credence, that she began to contemplate using material accumulated over a long period of time, for the purpose of giving a picture, that was truthful, of persons and events so absurdly travestied. This change of sentiment about publicity influenced her to print extracts from her Journals, and subsequently determined His Majesty the King to allow the publication of her correspondence.

When I spoke of the importance of atmosphere in history, and the difficulty of creating it, I had, as I have said, already determined not to make the attempt. My intention was to give you pictures of the Queen in her own words. We have had a glimpse of the Child Princess in that "Palace in a Garden" which appealed so strongly to the author of "Sybil," the hours passed in the schoolroom with the Dean of

Chester, or at a music-lesson, or washing her terrier "Dash," with an occasional ride on her pony, accompanied by her mother, and on Sundays making extracts of the sermon.

There was the weekly letter from her uncle, King Leopold, to be read, and perhaps a lecture to be heard in the presence of her Mother, from Baron Stockmar. She played with her dolls. There were hundreds of them, small dolls, most of which she dressed herself, and ticketed with well-known names of illustrious persons whom she had seen dining at Kensington Palace, or whom she had watched from the Duchess of Kent's box at the Opera. All these dolls were carefully preserved and are alive to this day numbered and catalogued in the young Princess's child hand.

Then suddenly she was Queen. After her Accession her life completely changed. To comparative isolation and greyness succeeded a period of high tension and keen enjoyment. Rose, not grey, became the prevailing colour. Her mind expanded at the touch of this wonderful spring time. A secluded maiden, whose only draught at the fountain of life had been an evening at the theatre, was suddenly translated from the schoolroom to the most exciting spheres of politics and of regal state. Her companions were thenceforth Ministers of State, *her* Ministers.

She no longer dressed dolls, but presided at

Councils. She, who had never walked down the staircase at Kensington Palace unless held by the hand, like a little child, rode twenty miles of a morning, at the head of a cavalcade of courtiers. She, who had spent her mornings with the excellent Dean of Chester, reading geography, now spent her afternoons with her Prime Minister, discussing the affairs of Europe.

But the aroma of the schoolroom was about her still. Here is her Journal for Monday, 2nd April 1838 :—

“ I said to Lord Melbourne I was so stupid that I must beg him to explain to me about Sir William Follett again ; he answered very kindly ; ‘ It is not stupid, but I daresay you can’t understand it ’ ; and he explained it to me like a *kind* father would do to his child ; he has something so fatherly, and so affectionate and kind in him, that one must love him.”

A week later the Queen writes describing one of many evenings spent with her Prime Minister at Buckingham Palace :—

“ Sunday, April 8.—Lord Melbourne looked over one of the Volumes (the 6th) of a work called ‘ Gallery of Portraits ’ ; there are portraits of all sorts of famous people in it, with short Memoirs of them attached to them. Lord Melbourne looked carefully over each, reading the accounts of the people and admiring the prints. I wish I had time to write down all the clever observations he made about *all*. It is quite a *delight* for me to hear him speak about all these things ; he

has such *stores* of knowledge ; such a wonderful memory ; he knows about everybody and everything ; *who* they were, and *what* they did ; and he imparts all his knowledge in such a *kind* and agreeable manner ; it does me a *world* of good ; and his conversations always *improve* one greatly.

" I shall just name a few of the people he observed upon :—*Rayleigh*, *Hobbes*, who was 'an infidel philosopher' ; he had been tutor to one of the Earls of Devonshire, he said ; *Knox* :—Lord Melbourne observed that those Scotch Reformers were very violent people ; but that Knox denied having been so harsh to Mary Queen of Scots as she said he had been ; *Lord Mansfield*; *Melancthon*, whose name means Black Earth in Greek, and whose head he admired ; *Pitt*, whose print Lord Melbourne said was very like ;—'he died in 1806 when I came into Parliament.' He (Ld M) came in for Leinster ; *Wesley*, Lord Melbourne said the greatest number of Dissenters were Wesleyans ; he read from the book that there were (at his death) 135,000 of his followers ; *Porson*, Lord Melbourne said : 'I knew him ; he was a great Greek scholar' ; and looking at the print—"it's very like him." *Leibnitz*, a great German philosopher, and a correspondent of Queen Caroline, wife to George II. ; spoke of her being so learned and her whole Court too ; 'the Tories laughed at it very much,' and Swift ridiculing the Maids of Honour wrote :—' Since they talk to Dr Clark, They now venture in the Dark.' *Addison*, Lord Melbourne admires his 'Spectator,' his 'Cato' he also admires, but says it's not like a Roman tragedy ; 'there is so much love in it.' Addison died at Holland House ; he disagreed very much with his wife, Lady Warwick. Holland House was built, he

said by Rich, Lord Holland in the reign of Charles 1st. *Madame de Stael*, whose print he thought very like; ‘She had good eyes, she was very vain of her arms.’ She was over here in ’15 and died in ’17, aged 51; she disliked dying very much; Lord Melbourne also knew her daughter the Duchesse de Broglie; he said ‘Louis Philippe dislikes her as much as Napoleon did *her Mother*.’ Lord Melbourne saw Madame de Broglie for a moment when he was at Paris for the last time in 1825. He read from the book, and with great emphasis, the following passage, what Napoleon said of Madame de Stael;—‘They pretend that she neither talks politics nor mentions me; but I know not how it happens that people seem to like me less after visiting her.’ *Queen Elizabeth*; spoke of her, and that her mother must have been very handsome; etc.

“Spoke of pictures; Lord Melbourne does not admire Murillo much, nor Rubens; he so greatly prefers the Italian Masters to any others; spoke of subjects for painting; of the Holy Family being constantly painted. ‘After all,’ he said, ‘a woman and a child is the most beautiful subject one can have.’”

Then she adds:—

“It was a most delightful evening.”

There is nothing very remarkable in these utterances of Lord Melbourne. The interesting aspect of them is the circumstances in which they were delivered. The normal evenings were spent in this fashion, following after mornings consumed in reading despatches, and in signing

her name, to be succeeded by afternoons occupied in riding through the streets and through the crowds that waited daily at Hyde Park Corner to see the Queen :—

“ At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12, I rode out with Lord Conyngham, Lord Uxbridge, Lord Byron, Lady Mary, dearest Lehzen, Miss Cavendish, Miss Quentain, Sir F. Stovin and Col. Cavendish, and came home at $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 3, having ridden *twenty-two miles*. . . . We rode very hard and Tartar went most *delightfully*, never was *there such a dear horse*. We rode to Richmond, through part of the Richmond Park, out at Robin Hood Gate, and home over Wimbledon Common and Vauxhall Bridge. It was as hot as summer, and *going* I thought I should have melted ; coming over Wimbledon Common there was some delicious air. It was a heavenly day. At 6 m. p. 4 came Lord Melbourne and stayed with me till 20 m. to 5. He seemed well. Spoke a good deal of my ride.”

Two more extracts from these early journals and I have done :—

“ 1838. Monday, July 9.—At $\frac{3}{4}$ p. 11 I went to a Review in Hyde Park. I could have cried almost not to have *ridden* and been in *my right place* as I ought ; but Lord Melbourne and Lord Hill thought it more prudent on account of the great crowd that I should not *this time* do so, which however now they all see I might have done. Lord Anglesey (who had the command of the day, looked so handsome, and did it beautifully and gracefully) regretted much I did not ride. I drove down the lines. All the Foreign

Princes and Ambassadors were there, and the various uniforms looked very pretty. The troops never looked handsomer or did better; and I heard their praises from all the Foreigners and particularly from Soult. There was an immense crowd and all so friendly and kind to me."

"1838. Wednesday, July 25.—Wrote my Journal. At a $\frac{1}{4}$ to 8, I went into the Throne Room with my Ladies and gentlemen and Feo and Mama, where I found the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duke of Sussex, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and Augusta and George. After waiting a little while we went into the green drawing-room, which looked very handsome lit up, and was full of people *all* in uniform. I subjoin an account of all the arrangements, and all the people. After remaining for about five minutes in that room, talking to several people, amongst others to good Lord Melbourne, we went into dinner which was served in the Gallery and looked, I must say, most brilliant and beautiful. We sat down *one hundred and three* and might have been more. The display of plate at one end of the room was really very handsome. I sat between Uncle Sussex and Prince Esterhazy. The music was in a small Orchestra in the Salloon, and sounded extremely well. Uncle Sussex seemed in very good spirits, and Esterhazy in high force and full of fun, and talking so loud. I drank a glass of *stein-wine* with Lord Melbourne who sat a good way down on my left between the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Holland. After dinner we went into the Yellow Drawing-room. Princesse Schwartzenberg looked very pretty but tired; and Mme. Zavadowsky, beautiful and so sweet and placid. About 20 m. after we ladies came in, the gentlemen joined us. I

spoke to almost everybody; Lord Grey looked well; the Duke of Wellington, ill, but cheerful and in good spirits. I spoke for some time also to Lord Melbourne who thought the Gallery looked very handsome; and that the whole ‘did very well’; ‘I don’t see how it could be better,’ he said. He admired the large diadem I had on.

“At about 11 came some people who (as the Gallery was full of dinner, &c.) were obliged to come through the Closet, and of whom I annex a list. Lady Clanricarde I did not think looked very well; Lady Ashley, Lady Fanny, Lady Wilhelmine, and Lady Mary Grimston looked extremely pretty. Strauss played delightfully the whole evening in the Saloon. After staying a little while in the Saloon, we went and sat down in the further Drawing Room, next to the Dining Room. I sat on a sofa between Princesse Schwartzenberg and Mme. Stroganoff; Lord Melbourne sitting next Mme. Stroganoff; and in a little while Esterhazy near him, and Furstenberg (who talked amazingly to Lord Melbourne, and made us laugh a good deal) behind him. The Duchess of Sutherland and the Duchess of Northumberland sat near Princesse Schwartzenberg and a good many of the other Ambassadors and Ambassadresses were seated near them. The Duchess of Cambridge and Mama, &c., &c., were opposite to us; and all the others in different parts of the room. Several gentlemen, foreigners, came up behind the sofa to speak to me. We talked and laughed a good deal together. I stayed up till a $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1. It was a successful evening.”

The language is very simple, but Macaulay’s famous description of a scene in Whitehall is not more vivid.

I have some faint hope that through the medium of these quotations from the Queen's Journals I may have been able to create that atmosphere of which I spoke. Remembering, as I myself do, what in later days that atmosphere was, I am more than diffident. During these later years, from which the published correspondence is far removed, there was a hushed reverence surrounding the Queen, hard to describe, and difficult even to suggest. It is no exaggeration to say that eminent statesmen and humbler folk alike moved through the corridors of Windsor as through a shrine. It was not the atmosphere of sycophancy or adulation. It was the atmosphere of deep memories, of noble names, of Imperial growth, of national struggles, and of glorious triumphs. It was an atmosphere of queenly pity, of intrepid courage, of personal sorrows, and of duties simply performed through long years, stretching far back beyond the remembrance of any save the Queen herself. In spite of its grandeur, there was a solitude, an aloofness, about the life of the Queen, which made men half afraid to speak above a whisper.

I have dwelt, I hope not unduly, upon the earlier years of the Queen's reign, for it is these years that the published correspondence covers. In preparing that correspondence for publication it was felt that it should tell its own story,

and that no attempt should be made to analyse or discuss the character and actions of the Queen. If it should be found possible to bring the story down to a later period the same course will be followed. And I may say that the interest deepened as the years rolled on. This is not only because events are more recent, and the personalities of those who surrounded the Queen are more vividly known to us; but because after the loss of her guide and counsellor in 1861 the character of the Queen changed and strengthened. For the first time she stood absolutely alone. Although, as she herself said, in her desolate and isolated condition she turned to Lord Palmerston and to Lord John Russell as old and tried friends, they did not and could not occupy the place that had been filled by Lord Melbourne in her girlhood, and by the Prince Consort through her happy married life. It is only within the last few months that by an accident the Queen's letters to Lord John Russell have come to light — and it is curious to observe that for four years she wrote to him in her own hand at least once a day. During most of that period Lord John Russell was Foreign Secretary. The Queen was learning to walk alone.

This is not the time or place in which to attempt any deeper analysis of the character of Queen Victoria. If, as Cardinal Newman

once said, men are guided by type rather than by argument, and if the majority are swayed more by example than by the logic of facts, the Queen has rendered a mighty service not only to her people but to her successors on the Throne of this Kingdom. No Sovereign ever exercised over the minds of men and women of many races a more powerful influence.

We started to enquire—What we owe to Queen Victoria? What was the secret of her influence? and what will be her place in history? I venture to hope that to these questions I may have suggested, under the necessary limitations of such an occasion as this, a partial reply. We owe to Queen Victoria the reinstatement of the Monarchical principle in the eyes of all grave and earnest men. We owe to her the deep respect with which the British Crown is regarded by the subjects of this vast Empire. The secret of her influence was her unfaltering devotion to duty, her simple regard and—if the word is not misplaced—her narrow adhesion to the plain unvarnished truth in every action and relation of her long life. To attempt to expose her weaknesses would be an unbecoming and singularly fruitless task. We do not claim—those who were her loyal and devoted subjects—that she was other than extremely human. But we do claim that, in the glare of her great virtues, her faults may be allowed to lie in shadow.

The Queen's place in history cannot yet be defined. There are few more treacherous quicksands than those which surround the domain of historical forecast. This much, however, may be safely ventured: that as the reign of Elizabeth rounded off and set a seal on that period of splendid intellectual growth, during which England became one of the first of European powers, so the reign of Queen Victoria rounded off and set a seal upon that no less heroic period of commercial and racial expansion in which Great Britain became a world-wide Empire.

VII

GENERAL GORDON

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE

MY acquaintance with General Gordon, which soon became a fast friendship, began in April 1880. He had been appointed Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India, and I was at that time acting in a similar capacity to Lord Hartington, who was Secretary of State.

On the 14th of May 1880 Gordon sailed for India, and my brother, who was *aide-de-camp* to Lord Ripon, sailed with him. They became very intimate, and Gordon gave him a little volume, "Clarke's Scripture Promises," and wrote in it, "To my dear and honest young friend Eugene L. Brett, 3 June, 1880."

It was the day that Gordon resigned his post as Private Secretary. On the 2nd of July he arrived at Pekin, and was soon engaged in helping his old friend, Li Hung Chang, who, as an advocate of peace, was in imminent danger from the War Party in China.

Gordon returned to England in November.

Early in the following month he came to see me at the Indian Office, and from that time onwards was constantly in and out of my house in Tilney Street. He would generally come in the morning, a queer figure, with a loose comforter round his throat, and a hat—by no means a good one—tilted back on his head; the eternal cigarette between his lips. He was of small stature—very small, like so many great men—and of spare figure. He would have passed unnoticed anywhere, except for his eyes, which were of that peculiar steel-like blue common to enthusiastic natures, more especially when the enthusiast is a soldier. He would lounge into the library, and stand—for he hardly ever cared to sit—for hours at a time, leaning against the mantelpiece, or walking up and down the room.

His talk was as fresh as a spring morning, full of humour, and his language as simple as the book of Genesis.

Complexity of thought, confusion of ideas, prolixity of speech, were impossible to him. He saw with wonderful clearness, perhaps sometimes not very far.

He detested cant, and although he could be strangely indignant, and was deeply roused by faithlessness, his charity knew no bounds. Repentance made up, in his eyes, for every crime. Hence his judgment of men was variable, and often appeared inconsistent. Although

it occasionally amused him to be deceived, he was rarely taken in.

His religion was never obtruded, but it was as much part of his daily life as smoking cigarettes. He literally walked with God, and if it were not disrespectful, one might almost say arm in arm with Him.

Our first talks were about India, for I was then much absorbed in the questions relating to that Empire, which were of primary interest—the settlement of Afghanistan and Indian finance.

Gordon was a rigid economist, and it was on financial grounds mainly that he favoured the retirement from Kandahar:—

“The strong point of the Government *vis-à-vis* Kandahar,” he wrote, “is the expense. Let them say to the Opposition, Will you tax the people of England to keep Kandahar? The Opposition will not answer this.”

His solution of all Frontier difficulties was an agreement with Russia:—

“I forgot to mention one point that I think of great importance—to have a Russian Envoy with the Court of the Viceroy, and an English Envoy with Kaufmann. A great many misunderstandings would then be avoided. We are certainly not strong enough to allow this, if Russia asks it.”

He was constantly railing at what he considered an extravagant scale of expenditure upon pay and allowances:—

"I would not alter the pay of the private soldier in India, but I should make an onslaught on other ranks. The cutting down must be done from home, in conjunction with Baring (now Lord Cromer, whom he looked upon as the one strong and able man in India); and as with the present high pay there is the greatest amount of grumbling, with the lower rate they would have something to grumble for. It is a pity not to have a cause for everything."

In January 1881 Gordon wrote to me at great length upon the necessity for economical administration in India, especially in view of the abandonment of the Opium Duty, which he believed to be inevitable :—

"Did Lord Northbrook show you a paper on Aden I sent him? Aden, above all places, wants looking to. There are three colonels or lieut.-colonels of R.A. there, and a colonel R.E. Singapore has a captain R.A. and a lieutenant R.E. All these holes and corners want routing out. They remind one of the sentry in the Winter Palace at St Petersburg, who had been put on by the Empress Catherine to watch a rose, and has been kept on ever since.

"The Commanders-in-Chief of the two Presidencies, Madras and Bombay, get £6,000 a year, and are an immense luxury. The post is a very subordinate one. Many Governors of Colonies do not get this salary. I am sure that an enormous saving could be made in Indian finance by working on the following lines :—

"(1) Disbelieve, or believe with some degree of mistrust, all that Indian military officials say

about impossibilities. Ditto with respect to civilians, in a lesser degree.

"(2) Judge everything for yourself from an Imperial point of view, and with a view to involve the higher native class in the success or failure of your government.

"(3) Do not believe that because you have not been in India you cannot be capable of forming an idea on the *great* topics. This, you will be told, is the case, and it is the barrier that is always raised to any improvement.

"The Chinese, I feel sure, whenever they feel themselves strong enough, will denounce the importation of opium, and they will never consider us sincerely their friends as long as opium is imported. I had some conversation with Li Hung Chang about the improvement of the Chinese forces, and I asked him what the Chinese would do, if they had sufficient forces, with respect to the opium traffic.

"He was decided in his remarks that they would refuse it. Therefore, without going into the question whether they are right or wrong, we may regard it as certain that the power only is wanting, not the will, on the part of the Chinese Government to stop the importation.

"Can India afford to give it up? Well, it cannot with its lavish expenses; but, from what I hear, the revenue from it is much less than is generally stated."

Gordon's zeal for economy, however, did not blind him to the curious inconsistencies of our administration, for from Aden he wrote to me :—

"The Red Sea demands a great deal more attention than it has had. Will you explain

to me how it is that our poor sailors and naval men are cooped up in cramped, close gunboats at Aden, Zanzibar, India, and China, and that they get not one *sou* more than their *confrères* in the Channel, while our officers get such immense increased pay in India?

“What is the real defence of England? Army or Navy? And why should this anomaly exist? It does seem extraordinary.”

I have met some ardent advocates of the “Blue Water School” in my time, but none ever surpassed in strenuous faith this soldier, whose love nevertheless of our small Army was very intense.

When in Mauritius, in June 1881, he was for ever railing against the folly of the scheme for the defence of that island. “The four hundred men there,” he used to say, “were expensive and useless.”

The idea that these four hundred men could defend an island five times as big as the Isle of Wight was absurd. All that was required was two hundred men to defend the sea forts at Port Louis, if these forts were properly armed, which then was not the case, and the balance of the money thus saved should be given “to the crews of four Alphabet gunboats with 38-ton guns, and these four, with the tugs of the Harbour duly manned, and two torpedo launches, would make a powerful squadron which would prevent any landing on the isle.

It would make us very strong in these seas." His eye was always on the sea:—

"The Red Sea," he writes, "is of the most vital importance to us, also the Persian Gulf. For, from the Persian Gulf, we could land arms and a few officers, and by a little expenditure of money we could bring those warlike tribes on to the flank of Russia advancing on Afghanistan, and we should risk nothing."

He used to lay stress on the immense value, according to his view, of stations in the Eastern Seas:—

"Taking Mauritius, with its large French population, the Cape with its ever-conflicting elements, Hong Kong with its vast population of Chinese, Singapore, and Penang with ditto, does it not strike you that if at suitable spots we can establish fortified coaling-stations, without the detrimental accompaniment of population, who may be with us or against us, but who at any time are a nuisance, we should do well?"

And then he goes on to argue strongly in favour of taking an island in the Chagos group, of which he drew an admirable little pen and ink sketch. He described it as: "A crescent-shaped, or rather horse-shoe-shaped, isle," with forty-two feet of water at the entrance of a harbour half a mile in width. Here he proposed to establish what he called a Maritime Fortress, with all the advantage of providing "no temptation to colonists," and which he looked upon as

a "strategic point of great importance *vis-à-vis* to India, Suez, and Singapore."

And then he adds :—

"It is wonderful how our people do not take up the view of our forefathers. The latter took up their position at all the salient stopping-points of the great routes. We certainly hold them, but we are hampered by colonial sentiment, and they have almost ceased to be our own."

The illuminating quality of Gordon's mind made Imperial strategy seem a very simple thing to him. He swept dogmatic theology and strategical detail into a secondary place. Just as religion was summed up by him into the simplest of all transcendental propositions, the belief in God, so, in his view, the safety of our country and the preservation of our Empire depended simply on command of the sea.

I cannot exemplify this better than by quoting part of a letter which he wrote to me from Port Louis on the 22nd of August 1881 :—

"Thanks for your letter 15 July, received 20 August, also for your question to Dilke; you could do no more. I would with pleasure let France or Italy take Tripoli; it could not hurt us in any way, for we could easily take it from them if we maintain our supremacy at sea. The occupation of those lands, Tunis and Tripoli, are so many drains of men and money for the countries which occupy them. They can never do much more than pay their way,

even if they do that. Their occupation is a weakness, not a strength, to the Mother Country.

"The occupation of Biserta, or of any other place in the Mediterranean, signifies not a jot, *as long as we have the command of the sea*. If we lost that, then we would lose Malta and the Canal. Depend on it, it is very much better to let France and Italy take Tunis, Tripoli, and Syria, and for us to keep a firm, distinct hold on Egypt, than it would be to oppose them. The annexation of those lands are decidedly awakening influences which will become open sores to the annexing countries. I would say, Do not take Egypt; keep a grip over it, and give its people free institutions, first breaking up its wretched crew of an army. Do not annex it. You only weaken yourself in doing so; but do not let others interfere with your policy there. This could be agreed upon between France, Italy, and England. Suppose Tunis, Tripoli, Syria annexed, France, England, and Italy would be *ensemble* against all Powers, who could do nothing. But then, I say, *see that your naval power is supreme*. England falls with a failure of that power. France by annexing Tunis has added to her difficulties and opened another weak place for her enemies to attack. She has just done what England might wish her to do; but England ought not, at Berlin, to have been double-faced about it. Why, it would cost us nothing if supreme at sea to drive them out in a fortnight by raising the population.

"Look at India: it dictates our policy entirely, and, whatever advantages it gives us, it certainly hampers us. Tunis will do this far more effectually for France. France will be much more

vulnerable with her new acquisition, *if we keep command of the sea.*

"I would put in Syria, for I want some other nation to help us to bar the advance of Russia in this direction. It could not matter to us who held Syria, *if we had command of the sea.*

"I look on the Red Sea and Egypt and Persian Gulf as being absolutely necessary to be under our control; not to annex, but to be supreme therein.

"As for the other parts, they are much better to be in French or Italian hands, for through those places they present vulnerable points of attack, *if we keep command of the sea.* To keep command of the sea, we have to take, first, the Home and Mediterranean fleets, which, I suppose, are formidable enough, and of which I say nothing. Second, the Chinese and Pacific stations, the Indian Ocean and Cape stations. Each of these stations should have regular fortified asylums, their lairs, where our ships could get all they want and to which they would repair, etc. These points, once fixed, ought to be supplied with a flotilla of fast, heavily armed light draft gunboats, so that when the fleet was away these gunboats could meet a hostile squadron in shallow waters, and prevent the lairs being captured by land forces. If you can get from Lord Northbrook the report on defence of these seas, which we have just drawn up, you will see all the detail of this scheme; I have not a copy to send you. My idea would be to make strong naval dépôts in each of the great seas; and I think that by a re-arrangement of the funds now paid, you could do this at no extra expense to the Government. *Reduce the troops and add to the Navy.*

To my mind, the troops cost a great deal more than they should."

About this time he was full of sorrows over our disasters at Ulundi, Laing's Nek and Majuba. The "58th Regt." was quartered at Mauritius, and he must have discussed over and over again with the officers of that regiment our South African misfortunes, for he wrote frequently to me, and at great length, the opinions he had formed of the tactics of Colley and the shortcomings of the Staff. For the purposes of South African warfare he expressed a firm and unwavering opinion that "mounted men" were essential. Large forces of infantry, he thought, were a mistake, and artillery, he repeats over and over again, "was useless, would always be useless, and was a cause of delay and danger, and that had the Boers pushed on at Ingogo all the guns would have been taken."

His view of the events which followed Majuba was put in a note of two lines to me, written from the Mauritius and dated 21st October 1881, after seeing some division list of the House of Commons :—

"So you would not vote on the Transvaal question. Quite right.

"Yours sincerely,

"C. E. GORDON."

Yet no heart ever beat with deeper sympathy for subject races "struggling to be free" than his.

I remember well the fiery accents in which he denounced the revival of the slave trade in the Soudan, after receiving a letter from his old lieutenant, Gessi, describing how much of the work which Gordon had spent years in doing had been undone. And later, from Havre, on his way to the Mauritius, he wrote to me lamenting that the British Government had not insisted on setting up a representative chamber in Egypt, with which they might have dealt, instead of having to "transact with Tewfik and a crew of Pashas."

One letter he heads with the words:—
"Absalom stole the hearts of the people from David. How? By sympathy with them." And he goes on to lay stress upon what he considered radically wrong in the "Control" and "Consuls Departments"; that they worked too much for the Bondholders and for the Egyptian Ministers and not for the people. No attempt, he declared, was being made to raise the morals of the people, with the consequence that, "like our Government in India, if we withdrew the pressure of the Consuls and Controllers everything would relapse into the former state."

He always considered De Lesseps an evil genius for Egypt from his "bondholding interests and great diplomatic power in every European State."



Affiliate, he kept on insisting, the native courts to the Mixed Tribunals, and by this means gain the hearts of the people ; and he ends one of his most striking letters with these words :—

“ To govern men there is but one way, and it is eternal truth, ‘ Get into their skins,’ that is, try and realise their feelings and to do to others as you would they should do to you. This is the true secret.”

As he left Marseilles in May 1881 he wrote piteously about the Soudan, in consequence of the appeals he received from his old friends and associates there :—

“ Is it quite hopeless to expect any ægis of protection to be placed over the poor people of the Soudan ? It only needs a word from Tewfik in order to stop the outrages on these people. That our Government can be so ignorant, or else so *insouciant*, is astonishing. I feel the bitterness I felt when in the Soudan at these oppressions, and have to fall back on my old text, ‘ If thou seest the oppressors of the wicked, marvel not at it, for the Higher than the Highest observeth it.’ Always remember that it is by little acts of justice costing nothing by which our country is blessed, and by which the evil results arising from our selfish greed are palliated. Good-bye ; I know it is no use talking or writing.”

Gordon’s belief in the virtues of representative institutions was one of the most curious traits in his character. It is rare that men who have

spent most of their lives among Eastern races, or in deserts, have much faith in what they generally regard as the shibboleths of Western civilisation.

In him the belief was genuine, and he fretted over the discontents of the French population of Mauritius and the hostility of the Roman Catholic Irish to British Rule.

In one of the last talks I had with him before he left for Brussels in 1882, he sketched out on a sheet of foolscap in the form of a diagram his remedy for the woes of Ireland. It was Home Rule of a kind that might not satisfy the zealous protagonists of that movement, but Home Rule it was after a fashion. He proposed that County Councils should be elected by what was practically manhood suffrage; that every County Council should elect representatives to serve on what he called a Local Government Board, and that to this Board should be delegated the control of the internal government of Ireland, legislative and administrative, but subject to the veto of the Imperial Parliament. I mention this to show how constantly his thoughts ran in the direction of self-government, whether for Egyptian Fellahs or Irish peasants, and how little he was inclined to trust in the good government of a dominant race. He was interested in all forms of administration, being a born administrator himself.

He described to me once a custom of the Chinese, which had made a great impression on him, under which men who belong to the College of Censors travel through the country and report on the deeds of the Local Authorities. These Censors have a right to address the Throne, and cannot be silenced. They arrive in some city, and remain there, observing and questioning. The Governor may offer them civilities, but they refuse them, and thus acquire great power.

"Even the Emperor is sometimes denounced by them, and their verdict is final, for they are not self-seekers. These Censors attacked my friend Li Hung Chang, so I recommended they should be smitten, for they had attacked him unjustly, because he knew and had said that China could not fight Russia.

"They are a wonderful set, and often die in defence of their rights. They are the men who denounce the opium trade. Fanatics, yet humble, they seek the welfare of their country, and live in penury."

This passage, full of admiration for these seekers after truth, but quite relentless when they happened to make a blunder, is a curious illustration of that extraordinary compound of imagination, and practical good sense which was so characteristic of Gordon's mind.

"I censored Lord Northbrook to-day," he continued, "and told him it was *mean* not to send reinforcements to Evelyn Baring (now Lord

Cromer), who was surrounded by Boers ; that Baring was a man who, if he was not supported, would resign ; that H.M.G. had put him there (in the Indian Council), and ought to help him ; and that he was worth all of them put together."

In attempting to draw this picture of Gordon, not of the soldier and hero, but of the man and friend, I cannot refrain from quoting one of the earliest letters I received from him. Although I worked fairly hard in those days, and was completely absorbed in Indian affairs, Gordon was fond of rallying me, in his sly humorous way, upon the "society" side of my life.

Sometimes I took him seriously, and would argue the point with him. It was after one of these discussions that he wrote to me as follows :—

" Since I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance I have seen a desire on your part to go into things which concern the welfare of our country, and with that desire a sentiment of not consulting expediency. Why do you not, with those of the rising generation, the successors of Gladstone, etc., form some sort of community and acquaint yourselves with all the ins and outs of our relations with the Colonies and foreign Powers, and thus prepare yourselves for the mantles of those now in office ?

" Now, I would say—take the general question of alliances, and ask yourselves who are our natural allies—*i.e.*, those who are less interfered with by our existence. Think that out. Then ask how are we situated with respect to nations in process of dissolution ? Would it be better

to let them dissolve, or to prevent it, and in what way, etc. You must know that, as a rule, our Ministers are a hand-to-mouth set; enough for the day its evil is their maxim. They have a lack-lustre eye for anything which does not press. They like not any opposition. They are much 'clerk' and 'official' ridden.

"I think if you and some of the younger men were to abandon your fearful treats, your dinner-parties, etc., you could come to some definite platform and work on it.

"It would indeed be absurd for me to give you a platform, but any defined platform would be better than drifting. Some of those who joined your party might in the recess go to India, China, or the Cape and collect information.

"That is what I would say if I belonged to your group. France and China are our natural allies. Remove all bothers with them. What bothers exist? How to deal with them? State of affairs in Africa, Tunis, Morocco, West Coast, Cape, Zanzibar, Egypt. If you and some of the other rising men would study these things and would agree on a definite policy, you would have great weight. It is certainly worth it. I declare we shall come to grief from laziness and ignorance, though the knowledge is at our door. Six united men with honest intentions would carry enormous weight. There is no doubt that in the recess you must not go to Scotland and shoot, but must go to the Colonies. I would have a regular department for each of you, and no needy man should be engaged.

"Excuse me writing so freely.

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"C. E. GORDON."

"P.S.—Depend upon it, a well-intentioned man, seeking not his own advantage, is capable of judging any military, civil, financial, or political question (as well as the most experienced Minister) in its *great aspects*."

Such was the force of Gordon's whimsical personality that his words carried weight altogether beyond their intrinsic value. This letter was shown to several friends, and I well remember the effect it produced upon the mind of Lord Grey, the present Governor-General of Canada, although he has probably forgotten it long ago.

In January 1884, after his interviews with Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, Gordon came for the last time to Tilney Street. He was leaving for Brussels. I can see him now, with his muffler and his worn coat, walking about the nursery with my eldest son in his arms.

From Brussels he wrote:—

"Brocklehurst is here with me. Government and authorities have been exceedingly kind, and I have every reason to be grateful to them, for I have often worried them, and they have decided to let me stay in H.M.S."

"I may say, I fear—for people have been too kind. Did you ever read *The Ring of Polycrates*?

"Wouldst thou escape the coming ill
Implore the dread Invisible
The sweets to sour."

"Good-bye. I will never forget you.

"Yours sincerely,

"C. E. GORDON."

Two months later he wrote to me from Khartoum. It was the last letter I received in that quaint small handwriting:—

“Thanks for your letter received to-day,” he wrote on the 3rd of March 1884. “I am sorry you worry about me, for, D.V., I am all right. I am comforted that if I try and do my best one cannot fail. As for Zebehr, I wish with all my heart he was here. He alone can ride the Soudan horse, and if they do not send him I am sentenced to penal servitude for my life up here.

“Bear this in mind, that it is impossible to hope for any compromise between H.M.G. and the Pasha tribe. I know it by experience, and I smite them with unrelenting severity, because I know it is hopeless to try and mollify them. I rejoice in so doing. It is no use trying to work with them. I wish our Government would see this. A French Consul will be here in two days. He will not bother me. We *must* evacuate the Soudan. It is absolutely necessary. In a year the slaves up here will rise and will emancipate themselves. What a wonderful *dénouement*, and how my prayers will have been heard !”

He added a few messages to my family, to his friend Colonel Brocklehurst, and to Lord Hartington. This was the end.

I have not set out with the intention of describing fully or of attempting to discuss the character of General Gordon. He stands above analysis and beyond discussion.

I have ventured to give to any reader of these pages an aspect of Gordon in his own words—words which he would have had no objection to speak from the housetops.

His letters, like his conversation, were full of humorous sallies, often at the expense of public men, and sometimes of private friends. These are sacred, under the seal of friendship.

There have been attempts made to belittle him, and to deprive him of some of the lustre which his life and death shed upon our country. “The greatest gift a hero leaves his race is to have been a hero.”

It is true that he took small account of the “great ones of the earth.” I am not sure that he possessed what is called a “dress suit.” He was never, to my knowledge, at an evening party, but he was seen to walk hand in hand with street arabs. He knew the Bible by heart, and the fear of man was not in him. Faithlessness was in his eyes the worst of crimes. I am sure that he went to his death as to a feast.

Many lies have been told of him. Even his moral character has not been spared.

It has been said that he failed to do his duty, and he has been called an inebriate. These accusations are absurdly false. But suppose they were true.

Some of us remember the terrible and lacerating words with which one of the gentlest spirits of the Victorian age crushed to the earth a man who had ventured to defame Father Damien :—

“ Suppose these things were true,” he wrote. “ Is it growing at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart ? I will try yet once again to make it clearer. You had a father : suppose this tale were about him, and some informant brought it to you, proof in hand ; I am not making too high an estimate of your emotional nature when I suppose you would regret the circumstance ? That you would feel the tale of frailty the more keenly since it shamed the author of your days ? And that the last thing you would do would be to publish it in the religious Press ?

“ Well, the man who tried to do what Damien did is my father and the father of the man at the Apia bar, and the father of all who love goodness ; and he was your father too, if God had given you the grace to see it.”

In the very heart of the metropolis Gordon’s statue stands under the shadow of the great Nelson Column. Both these men claimed that they had tried to do their duty, and not vainly. Nelson had many frailties ; Gordon had but few.

But, few or many, Gordon is the father of every patriotic man and woman of English

blood. Especially is he the father of the poor and humble children whom he loved, and he is the father of every one of his detractors, "if God had given them the grace to see it."

VIII

LORD ROSEBERY AND MR PITT

LORD ROSEBERY's monograph on Mr Pitt is a unique book. It is the biography of a statesman written by a statesman. No other book exactly fulfils these conditions. Eminent politicians have composed biographies of statesmen. And one statesman—Mr Disraeli—is responsible for a charming and brilliant account of an eminent politician. But Lord Rosebery, if his achievements in public life are momentarily forgotten, has shown himself, in the pages of this book, to possess those qualities of vision and grasp of political problems which indicate statesmanship of a high order.

"The life of Mr Pitt," his biographer says, "has yet to be written." This may be true, for, buried in family archives and among papers mislaid—such as those of George III.—which may some day see the light, there must remain a quantity of material of much value. But for many years to come the "Life of Pitt" which Englishmen will read will be Lord Rosebery's little volume.

To many, however, the charm of this book will be the light reflected upon the character of the great Minister from one who is not unlikely to be found among his successors at the helm of the State. From this point of view it is interesting to note the points in Mr Pitt's character and the lines of his policy which commend themselves to his biographer. Analysis of this kind will not be best pleasing to Lord Rosebery, who, having forgotten himself in his hero, doubtless expects his readers to do likewise. But such an expectation is extravagant, and he must pay the penalty of being a more interesting personage than Bishop Tomline, or than even his own distinguished relative, Lord Stanhope.

In private life high spirits in a man are rarely combined with personal dignity. Neither does incisive wit, as a rule, go hand in hand with affectionate loyalty to friends. The temptation to try a fine-tempered instrument on the foibles of a friend is strong; while to yield often to the temptation fossilises the heart. In like manner high spirits are with difficulty eclipsed suddenly behind a mask of stateliness. Either the mask ceases to fit, or it becomes immovably fixed upon the wearer's face. This double combination, however, Mr Pitt possessed, and Lord Rosebery, with fellow-feeling, likes to dwell upon it.

In the winter of 1780-81 the precursor of Mr Albert Grey's Eighty Club met at "Goosetrees."

It is, perhaps, rash to compare the solemn assembly of elderly youths who occasionally meet together to listen to postprandial lectures from some meteoric politician, with the young men who assembled a hundred years ago to sup, play cards, and discuss politics. For the manners of to-day are more prudish, if they are no purer, and faro was played at "Goosetrees." The breach of that custom is doubtless a gain to modern aspirants to political fame. Mr Pitt must have thought so, for, although he joined in the game and played it with intense earnestness, he became alive to its dangerous fascination, and suddenly abandoned it for ever. At "Goosetrees," among his friends, in the society of Wilberforce, of Pepper Arden, of Edward Eliot and Henry Bankes, he was seen at his best. "I was one of those," wrote Wilberforce, "who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakespeare at the 'Boar's Head' in East Cheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in the required allusion." In his biographer, had it been possible, Mr Pitt might have met his match.

To these same friends, to Lord Wellesley, and, notoriously, to Dundas, his lifelong political associate, Mr Pitt remained firmly and warmly

constant. In the long indictment against him the count that he neglected his friends is not to be found. Except in the case of Dundas, he was not severely tested. To Mr Pitt's proud spirit and nature wholly free from corrupt motive the successful attack upon Melville's integrity was a terrible trial. But he bore the strain unswervingly, and there is no record that he ever reproached Melville by a word. After Melville's disgrace, it is related that he visited Mr Pitt at Bath. The Tartuffian soul of Addington could not stand this meeting, which must have been painful enough to the old friends. "I hear," wrote Mr Fox, "the Doctor talks of it with uplifted eyes, and says he cannot believe it." Addington's was not the class of mind capable of understanding that fidelity of man to man may outweigh any political consideration. To stick to a friend in disgrace is a rare test of man's quality. Mr Pitt bore the test with his usual dignity and calmness. That he felt deeply no one doubted, least of all his enemies, who crowded round after the fatal division to watch the tears coursing down the cheeks of him whose imperious scorn had so often cut them to the quick. You feel, when Lord Rosebery describes the scene, that he would have been glad to join arms with Canning and ring the Minister round, to protect him from the jeers of his foes. And Lord Rosebery

must remember with satisfaction, how, on the receipt of the news that Khartoum had fallen and Gordon was dead, a younger politician—emulating Canning in loyalty, surpassing him in generosity—wrote immediately to Mr Gladstone offering to accept office in an Administration then discredited, which only a short while before, in times of prosperity, he had refused to join.

Every man who, while still young, takes himself seriously, or is taken seriously by others, thinks it necessary to compose for himself a mask. He inevitably becomes, to some extent, what the French call a *poseur*. Lord Rosebery, who in his Eton days had already mentally commenced the biography of Mr Pitt, astonished his teachers by the gravity of his demeanour. One who remembers Lord Dalmeny when he arrived at Eton as a “new boy,” describes the gravity with which he used to lie by while others talked, and wait for a chance of saying at his ease something unexpected and *sec*; how remarkably he possessed, even then, that capacity for the cool adjustment of two dissimilar things which makes a spark, and is called wit; and how, even in boyhood, his wit was interlaced, as it is in the volume just published, with a fine sentiment. In language not very dissimilar, Mr Wilson describes the young William Pitt of whom he had charge. From

sympathy, innate rather than acquired, Lord Rosebery obviously comprehends and appreciates the cold dignity of Mr Pitt's manner, so unusual in a youth. But, as a child, Mr Pitt had learned from Lord Chatham, a master of histrionics, to be dignified and self-possessed in the presence of strangers. "Little Mr Secretary," or "the Philosopher," as he was called, was fond of romps, his father tells us; but his tutor writes of him, at seven years old, as sage and self-possessed, and, even then, intelligent enough to rejoice that his father's peerage would still leave to him the name of William Pitt, and that, not being the eldest son, he could "serve the country in the House of Commons like his papa." Lord Rosebery also can appreciate the "grim humour of the British Constitution which, in the prime of life and intellect, may pluck a man from the governing body of the country in which he is incomparably the most important personage, and set him down as a pauper peer in the House of Lords." He himself is in a position to appraise the grim humour of the Constitution, which likewise may ordain that a man eminently qualified to shine in the House of Commons, possibly to rule that unruly assembly, may never have been eligible to sit there. It is idle but curious to speculate upon what might have happened if an accident of an accident had removed Mr Pitt's elder

brother from the scene at any time during Mr Pitt's boyhood, or indeed up to 1801. Yet, a century ago, political power had not, as now, passed completely to the House of Commons. Now it is only under conditions specially favourable that a Prime Minister can govern the country from a seat in the House of Lords. One essential condition is that the Leader of the House of Commons should not be of pre-eminent ability. Lord Salisbury, it is said, realised fully the advantage to his government of the retirement of Lord Randolph Churchill from the leadership of the Lower House. Had this not happened he would have ceased to be first in Cabinet Council. With self-assertion in his disposition, the Leader of the Commons is certain to prevail over the Head of the Government, handicapped by the ponderosities of the House of Lords. With the removal of Lord Randolph Churchill, all possible opposition to Lord Salisbury from within the Government disappeared. With the exception of Mr Balfour, the Prime Minister's colleagues, if not exactly ornamental phantoms, as Lord Rosebery calls Mr Pitt's, were all very excellent and clerkly persons, and neither individually nor collectively did they threaten his authority. Mr Balfour's relation to him was peculiar and unusual. So that Lord Salisbury was master of his Cabinet very much as Mr Pitt was master of his. But there

is a difference. For had Mr Pitt been removed to the Upper House, his lieutenants in the House of Commons would have been left unprotected, and exposed to the full blast of an opposition oratory unrivalled in parliamentary history. Lord Salisbury's lieutenants, on the other hand, enjoyed the support of allies who more than covered their deficiencies. The Liberal Unionists stood towards the Government in much the same relation as the goddesses of Olympus stood towards their favourite combatants in the Trojan war. One of them, indeed, in the guise of Mr Goschen, actually fought within the ranks.

But mythological conditions such as these are rarely found, and the rule gains in stringency every year that our Constitution, if it is to work smoothly, demands that the Prime Minister shall be in the House of Commons, and shall be the most powerful and capable member of his party. If the grim humour of the Constitution in its present form puts obstacles in the way, these obstacles must give place to necessity. For the days of Portlands and Rockinghams and Liverpools are over, and experimental excursions in the direction of such methods of compromising rival ambitions can only lead to parliamentary confusion.

Lord Rosebery is apparently imbued with this conviction, and in view of future possibilities

it is a point of considerable interest both to him and his fellow-countrymen. Speaking of Shelburne and Fox, and the impossibility of their serving together as respective leaders of the two Houses, he points out that, although it would be “too much to maintain that all the members of the Cabinet should feel an implicit confidence in each other, humanity—least of all political humanity—could not stand so severe a test, yet between a Prime Minister in the House of Lords and the Leader of the House of Commons such a confidence is indispensable. Responsibility rests so largely with the one and articulation so greatly with the other, that unity of sentiment is the one necessary link that makes a relation, in any case difficult, in any way possible. The voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau may effect a successful imposture, but can hardly constitute a durable Administration.”

But no “unity of sentiment” could have made an Administration durable of which Lord Shelburne was the head, and in which Fox was set to lead the House of Commons. To Lord Rosebery the character of Shelburne—one of the suppressed characters of English history, as Lord Beaconsfield described him—appears to be antipathetic.

It was not otherwise to his contemporaries. Yet this is strange, for, though Shelburne was, as Lord Beaconsfield depicted him, of a reserved

and somewhat astute disposition, and although deep and adroit, he was brave and firm. Besides, his administrative ability was conspicuous, and the richness and variety of his information on all political and historical questions was remarkable. He has been called the ablest and most accomplished Minister of the eighteenth century by one of whom, without much exaggeration, a similar phrase might be used in the nineteenth. For such a man, with such attainments, Lord Rosebery might have been expected to feel some sympathy. Imagine some Shelburne of our own time, interested as he was in foreign affairs, maintaining relations with the principal European Courts as a friend of foreign Ministers, not supreme in debate, but eminent in the art of parliamentary disputation, a man in whose knowledge of affairs the public feel confidence, and confident himself in his power of directing them wisely. Imagine, further, such a man Prime Minister, in the House of Lords, out of touch with the dominant Chamber. And, finally, imagine, in a nominally subordinate position, Mr Fox, perhaps the representative of some large popular constituency, such as Derby—conscious of his power to indulge in every caprice of the moment, headstrong in foreign politics, impetuous in judgments formed hastily, as a fighter in the van forms judgments, and not with all the responsibility of supreme leadership, wielding

the vast authority which a parliamentary majority in the House of Commons bestows upon its Leader. Such a political combination could not from the nature of the case be otherwise than unstable. Mr Fox, anxious for the maintenance of a Government of which he himself was the head, chastened by all the weighty cares of supreme responsibility, might have governed the country with advantage and success. But as a subordinate, even to Shelburne, the idea was preposterous. Mr Pitt himself, ten years younger than Fox, and twenty-three years younger than Shelburne, felt the incongruity of a similar position. He tried it, but was not anxious to revive the experiment.

Mr Pitt's Government affords proof of how strong and durable a Government can be at the head of which stands a supremely able man, supported in the main by colleagues, perhaps good administrators, possibly wise in council, but inarticulate in parliament. Mr Pitt stood alone, and held his own with perfect ease in debate. Dundas was his second. The rest were ciphers. Yet Mr Pitt succeeded where Governments of all the talents, one Administration which preceded and two which have followed his, failed to govern well, or to maintain their ground for long against debating power very inferior to that which Mr Pitt successfully resisted. The Whigs who founded "govern-

ment by Cabinet" had no conception of a first Minister other than as one of the King's servants who should be *primus inter pares*. As late as 1782 Lord North would not permit his family to call him Prime Minister, declaring the term to be unconstitutional. And when he met Mr Fox for the first time to discuss the basis of the Coalition, and Mr Fox put forward the Whig theory of Cabinet responsibility for the government of the country, in opposition to what was then called "government by departments," controlled either by the Monarch, or by a Minister in the name of the Monarch, this view was cordially accepted by Lord North, and the principle influenced the conduct of business by the Joint Administration which was formed shortly afterwards. But it was repudiated by Mr Pitt when he assumed office. Brought up a Whig, he broke the Whig tradition. His relation to George III. was rather that of an Imperial Chancellor than an English Premier. No doubt this was largely due to the character of the man, to his extraordinary self-confidence, and his quiet assumption that he was a match for any man or combination of men. The training of his boyhood, and his "sequestration," as he called it, in early youth from all companionship save that of Lord Chatham, had led him to think that, if he was a fit companion for his father, he was fitted to rule mankind. Lord

Chatham describes how carefully he was forced to watch himself, conscious that his son imitated him from childhood. He discussed literature and politics with his son when the boy had not passed his fourteenth year. Even then the "fineness of his mind," Lady Chatham writes, "made him enjoy with the highest pleasure what would be above the reach of any other creature of his small age." And Mr Hollis, who visited father and son when they were residing together at Lyme Regis, noted the "Counsellor's" firm accents, and observed how distinct and clear his ideas were. Mr Hollis and the boy of fourteen, "these two friends of liberty and virtue," as Lord Chatham calls them, "were *tête-à-tête*, walking up and down the steep hill. In this converse not only the constitution of the State, but the universal frame of Nature, was, I daresay, thoroughly discussed." What wonder that the lad acquired confidence in himself? It must have seemed so natural to him that the son, the friend, the companion of Chatham, should not find his equal among men. His precocity was very plainly recognised by Lord Chatham. To his "sweet intelligent boy" who was the "hope and comfort of his life," he writes congratulating himself that there was at Cambridge "one without a beard, yet with all the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say 'This is a man.'" When at twenty-one he

appeared in the House of Commons, Mr Fox said Lord Chatham was living again in his son. So Mr Pitt, probably unconsciously, believed, and his public declaration—which in any one else would have been thought somewhat presumptuous—that he would not accept a subordinate office, came quite naturally from the lips of one who, as Lord Rosebery says, went into the House of Commons as an heir enters his home. This self-confidence, which in men who fail is ridiculous, in those who succeed has a touch of sublimity. Nor is such *fierté* uncommon in those destined to rule. Lord Rosebery perhaps remembers that, years ago, a young politician, who had just—what is with singular inappropriateness called—finished his education, was warned by an old and affectionate teacher “not to take plush,” whereby was meant one of those subordinate ornamental appointments which Ministers are fond of dangling before the eyes of promising youth. The reply was what Mr Pitt might have written under similar circumstances: “I have been offered plush tied up with red tape, and have refused it.”

Mr Pitt, apart from his striking personality, is a figure specially interesting as the founder of modern Liberalism. Lord Rosebery felicitously points out that Liberalism represents less the succession to, than the revolt against, Whiggery. The Venetian party, as Lord

Beaconsfield calls the Whigs, had well-nigh completed their noble work for England. They achieved this, that they made modern England possible without a revolution. But the days in which oligarchical government was possible were fast passing away. The rapid decay of the Whigs dates from the Coalition Government. The phrase which Lord Rosebery uses about Mr Fox was true of the Whig party—the swell of soul was no more. Their work was done. Under the auspices of Adam Smith and of Edmund Burke the Liberal Party slowly acquired shape with Mr Pitt for a leader. He himself, during the first ten years of his administration, was as much a modern Liberal as though he were the president of a caucus. At that time, “the people,” politically speaking, were the middle classes, and Lord Rosebery calls him the man of the middle classes. He should be canonised as their patron saint, for in him is personified all that is best in them. Parliamentary reform, Free Trade, the removal of religious disabilities—these were the subjects that occupied his mind. They are the well-worn planks of the Liberal platform at the present time. No doubt he became absorbed in the duty forced upon him of carrying on a great war. But this is not seriously incompatible with Liberal opinions, for, although Liberals commonly denounce war in the abstract, Liberal

Prime Ministers have a singular aptitude for becoming involved in warlike operations; — while in the prosecution of them they invariably manage to retain the support of their followers.

The Whigs, even when they voted for him, hated Mr Pitt, much as in recent times their descendants hated Mr Gladstone. And for very similar reasons. He was, as Gibbon said, excellent and virtuous — qualities which commend a man to the middle classes, but not to an oligarchy. Of his virtue, no one who knew him ever doubted. “Adieu, again and again, sweet boy!” wrote Lord Chatham; “and if you acquire health and strength every time I wish them to you, you will be a second Samson, and, what is more, will, I am sure, keep your hair!” Lord Chatham, as far as the world is aware, was not mistaken. But, nevertheless, the Whigs, many of whom possessed a characteristic capacity for subordinating their private sentiments to fondness for the winning side in politics, disliked Mr Pitt as much as they loved the dissolute and charming patrician who was his political rival. It was said of him in complimentary condemnation—

“*Multa tulit fecitque puer; sudavit et alsit;
Abstinuit Venere.*”

Experience, perhaps, justifies that instinct which is mistrustful of irreproachable virtue in a politician, for often this quality has been found

not incompatible with tyrannical ideas and unscrupulous methods of enforcing them. A man who has contrived to chain up the wild beast within himself takes but little account of fetters, and easily persuades himself that it is his duty to adjust gyves to the wrists of his neighbours. But among the inheritance of the Whigs was another instinct — that true appreciation of political facts which no prejudices can altogether smother in a governing class. And while Mr Fox remained of the opinion that the business of an Opposition is to oppose, he himself was aware, and showed by his subsequent conduct as a Minister that he was aware, that Mr Pitt, during the second half of his administration, was not only an English Prime Minister but that he was the leader of every man in Europe who desired Europe to be free. It was on this ground that the Portland Whigs openly supported the Government of Mr Pitt. Lord John Russell, who speaks with the authority of Whigdom, repudiates the idea that Mr Pitt was affected by Burke's policy of a crusade against the revolutionary Government of France. Mr Pitt, he says, took a totally different view of the nature and object of the war. He was ready to admit that we had nothing to do with the internal government of France, provided its rulers were disposed and able to maintain friendly relations with foreign Governments. He sought

to confine France within her ancient limits, to oblige her to respect established treaties, and to renounce her conquests. In short, he treated Robespierre and Carnot as he would have treated any other French rulers whose ambition was to be resisted and whose interference in the affairs of other nations was to be checked and prevented.

Lord Rosebery's view is not different. In his opinion the Government, it can hardly be denied, pushed their neutrality to an extreme point, before Mr Pitt yielded to the rising temper of the nation. He sees, as fair-minded men not infatuated by Whiggery, like one eminent historian, or not gazing at Mr Pitt's career through the eyes of an Irish attorney, like another, have long ago seen, this pathetic figure of a peace-loving Minister, caring for his budgets and his domestic reforms, clinging to hope with the tenacity of despair that war may be averted; but "as it fades, the darkness closes, and the Pitt of peace, prosperity, and reform disappears for ever."

Lord Rosebery has no doubt about Mr Pitt's policy in regard to the great war; and it is well that he has not. For it is by his appreciation of this crisis in our national affairs that a statesman may fairly be judged who has not himself been tried with fire. Lord Rosebery's tenure of the Foreign Office was short. And, although he

showed a firm grasp of the sound principle of continuity in the conduct of foreign affairs and a great power of hard work, he had no opportunity for a full display of his capacity. He held office so short a time that it would be grotesque to attempt to form a final opinion of him as a Foreign Minister by his attitude towards the Triple Alliance, or by his language to Russia in what was called the "Batoum Despatch."

In describing, however, the struggle which was sincerely made by Mr Pitt to maintain peace, and even, after two years of war, to secure it, and, further, in the unhesitating approval which he gives to the main purpose of the war, Lord Rosebery's bent of mind can be followed. In the last words he spoke in public Mr Pitt remarked that England had saved herself by her exertions, and would, he trusted, save Europe by her example. The great need for exertion was by no means over, and on the morrow of Austerlitz, in spite of Trafalgar, England was not saved. The whole war with Napoleon was the touchstone of the spirit of our race. The recognition of this, and of the part which Mr Pitt filled, is the touchstone of the mind of a statesman. While Mr Fox could write of an English military force employed against the enemies of his country that "he believed, as well as hoped, that it had

not the smallest chance of success," the English people suffered privations, sacrificed blood and treasure, under the disinterested guidance of a Minister who alone stood upright in Europe against the furious blasts of French militarism. It is small wonder that Mr Pitt was neglectful of literary talent, of science, and of artistic merit. His mind, and the minds of his countrymen, were too full. Yet this neglect has been charged against his memory. It is certainly true that at no time in history was English art at a much lower ebb. Houses and streets which grew up in those days were meanly built. Oak ceased to be used in constructing dwelling-houses and furniture. It was wanted for Lord Nelson's ships. And money was wanted badly for Mr Pitt's vacillating allies on the Continent. What small sums men had to spare in those days they spent in having engraved on seals, or carved on rings, the image of the Minister who represented to them the struggle of the nation to maintain its independence, and they wore them with pride during his lifetime, and with pious sorrow after his death.

Whatever the future may hold in store for Lord Rosebery, whatever the relation between him and his countrymen may prove to be, he has given them an opportunity of stamping their minds and those of their sons with the image of an Englishman who, if he failed to organise

victory, at least enabled England to maintain the position which Burke assigned her as the tutelary angel of the human race.

No portion of Lord Rosebery's story of Mr Pitt's career can have been so difficult to write as the chapter in which he deals with Ireland. Certainly in no portion of the volume has the author achieved greater success. Hampered by the knowledge that every line would be scrutinised for references to the living controversy, he nevertheless has boldly defended Mr Pitt's policy; he has described it as "generous and comprehensive in conception as it was patriotic in motive." Lord Rosebery's personal position in dealing with this subject must obviously have been unenviable had he lacked courage.

To have been a member of the Cabinet which introduced the Home Rule Bill of 1886, to be one of the leaders of a party pledged to introduce another Bill for the modification of the Act of Union, to know that your political opponents and many kind friends are watching for every slip or ambiguity of expression—these are not the conditions under which an appreciative biographer would choose to discuss the Union and the Irish policy of Mr Pitt: yet the task has been accomplished. The policy of the Union has been justified, the circumstances attending it more than extenuated, and the personal relation of Mr Pitt to the transactions

of the year 1800 amply defended. And Lord Rosebery issues from the ordeal uncompromised and logically consistent as a defender of Mr Pitt and a lieutenant of Mr Gladstone. It is a notable feat. But it is more than notable, it is eminently useful. For Lord Rosebery helps to rehabilitate the policy of Home Rule, not, perhaps, before some such process had begun to be required. Mr Gladstone, owing to the youthful indiscretion of a follower, had been made to appear as the denouncer of his great predecessor. The cry had been taken up, not unnaturally, and one more splash of tar had been cast at a policy which has been distorted and magnified by violent partisanship on both sides, into proportions wholly false, which it never ought to have assumed in discussion and never can assume in a practical form. In the first year of the century, as towards its close, there were many circumstances which necessitated the trial of a new experiment in Irish government. First, Mr Pitt was hampered in the Continental struggle by an ill-governed, rebellious Ireland in his rear. Secondly, it had become apparent that, under a constitutional monarchy, a king cannot act as a sovereign of two independent and co-equal parliaments. The King of England has no constitutional power apart from his Ministers for the time being. Except upon their advice, and through them,

he cannot perform any political act. His Ministers are responsible to the English House of Commons, and may be retained or dismissed by a well-understood process at its pleasure. Therefore, by an obvious logical inference, the English House of Commons must, under the Constitution as the English people had got to understand it, possess supreme authority over every legislative or executive body dependent for the full exercise of its powers upon the concurrence of the sovereign. The arrangements under which the Irish Parliament had come into existence in 1782 did not work smoothly or even possibly under these conditions. No form of Home Rule which does not recognise this constitutional fact and provide for it has a fair chance of permanent success.

Another reason which made a change in the government of Ireland urgent and imperative was the internal condition of the Irish Parliament. Except by means of gross corruption, Ireland could not be governed through the Irish House of Commons. There had been a time when a similar state of things existed in England. But with a purer system of government Ireland had not kept pace, and corruption, worse than that of Walpole, was rampant. In the Irish House of Commons eighty-four seats were close boroughs, so that to talk as if Ireland, in losing her Parliament, had lost a

representative assembly, is absurd. Reform, at that time, was impossible. Mr Pitt had tried Reform in England and had failed. For another generation Parliament remained unreformed, and Ireland meanwhile had to be governed. Mr Pitt had contemplated abolishing, by purchase from their patrons, the close boroughs in England. This is what was done by Cornwallis and Castlereagh in Ireland. Recently, for present political purposes, it has become the fashion to say that monstrous means were used to induce the Irish people to sell their birthright. But the means used to bring about the Union were not one whit more monstrous, or indeed different, from those used normally to govern Ireland. While to describe as the birthright of a people an assembly dominated by eighty-four borough representatives in the hands of a few nobles, is a ludicrous misuse of terms. The means used were not unobjectionable, wrote Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, a fair-minded critic, but they were less objectionable than force, which was the only practicable alternative of bringing about the Union. And not because the people valued their birthright, but because the Union robbed the borough-monger of his lucrative business, and checked the corrupt dealing of lawyers and professional politicians. The means used were a million and a quarter spent in compensating the patrons

of boroughs, and a shower of peerages and pensions on deposed functionaries. It has been supposed that secret and unavowed means of corruption were used. But the Cornwallis and Castlereagh papers refute this suggestion. There was a bargain, as Sir G. Lewis observed, but it was a bargain in market overt. For every penny spent was accounted for in documents made public by Mr Pitt, after the Union was accomplished. Cornwallis — the sterling splendour of whose character Lord Rosebery recognises — hated having to use the means employed. But he never suggested that any other were possible. And, like Castlereagh, he believed he was finally corrupting in order to permanently purify Irish government. The end may not justify the means, but it qualifies the estimate which reasonable men put upon them. Cant is the weakness of our race. We are fond of flattering ourselves that we are not as our forefathers were. Yet the political end is, in these days, often considered to excuse the political means. The late Lord Wolverton used to assert that he had, on one occasion, given an Irish member of Parliament two hundred pounds for his vote. Certainly peerages, and so-called honours, have been dangled by Party Whips before the eyes of wavering followers in even more recent days. While, in principle, there is very little to

distinguish the offer of a large measure of land-purchase at the public expense to Irish landlords, to induce them to modify their hostility to a Bill for Home Rule, from the measure by which Mr Pitt obtained the assent of the Irish borough lords to the Union. Statesmanship sometimes requires that of two evils the lesser be chosen. The majestic mind of Burke was torn by conflicting desires to free Ireland from misgovernment and to maintain the independence in Europe of Great Britain. It is easy, from the safe distance of a lapsed century, to look back and judge the methods of men who were forced to decide questions of national life and death amid the lurid clouds of war abroad and disaffection at home.

If the claim of the Irish to manage their domestic affairs at the end of the nineteenth century is based upon the proceedings which took place at the end of the eighteenth to induce them to abandon that privilege, it might well be dismissed as frivolous. It is a gross though common form of superstition that forms and methods of government are based on eternal principles. Were it so, to govern would be a simple matter of administration. But the varying circumstances of a people, the constantly modified conditions of national prosperity, the ever-changing relations between races of different blood and habits—these are the unknown and

unknowable factors which dominate politicians, and make of statesmanship not a science but the finest of fine arts. The Union was proposed and carried by men who were impressed by the necessity of dealing with Irish misgovernment in the interests of both countries, and regarded this measure as a hopeful experiment. "Ireland cannot be saved," wrote Cornwallis, "without the Union, but there is no certainty that it will be saved by the Union." It was, in truth, no certainty. Many experiments have since been tried to save Ireland. And it is in the nature of a further experiment that men, not infatuated by shibboleths or blinded by partisanship, view the proposal of Home Rule.

The Union was a portion only of Mr Pitt's scheme for Ireland. It is his sinister destiny, Lord Rosebery points out, to be judged by this petty fragment. He strove hard to carry through a comprehensive policy, and in the effort he fell from power. No stronger proof of sincerity can be required from a Minister. It is at this point in his career that his conduct as a gentleman is called into question. He has been charged with having, in March 1801, abandoned the position which he had adopted in February, for the purpose of maintaining his place at the head of the Government; and having, with the approval of his colleagues, resigned office on the refusal of the King to

agree to Catholic Emancipation, he is accused of having secretly, without the knowledge of his colleagues, written to the King and offered *to abandon that measure and to carry on the government.* The evidence upon which these charges are based is a statement of Lord Malmesbury's that Mr Pitt had written such a letter to the King, and Mr Fox's assertion that Lord Grenville had informed him that Mr Pitt had made such a proposal, and that he knew nothing of it. If such a letter ever had been written, it seems incredible that no copy of it should have been made and preserved among Mr Pitt's papers. Lord Stanhope and Sir G. Lewis disbelieved Lord Malmesbury's statement. It seems clear that Dr Willis, who had repeated George III.'s complaint to Mr Pitt that his illness was owing to the conduct of his Minister, carried back to him the promise from Mr Pitt that he would not in the King's lifetime reopen the question. But it is equally clear that Canning and his other friends pressed him to retain office, and that he refused to make any advance or proposal, or to move in the matter.

There remains Lord Grenville's statement to Mr Fox. If Lord Grenville's feelings towards Mr Pitt, shown by his refusal to join him in 1804, are taken into consideration, it seems not impossible that he may have put the darkest

interpretation upon a transaction that must, to those not completely in Mr Pitt's confidence, have been always obscure. All that Lord Grenville can have known of his own knowledge was that Mr Pitt had not taken him into confidence. That Mr Pitt had written to the King, with or without the approval of Dundas, can only have been known to him at second-hand.

Lord Rosebery has not cared to pursue in great detail this matter, and apparently prefers to set the unquestionable facts of Mr Pitt's resignation on the Catholic question, and his retirement from office for years, against doubtful secret transactions, based not even upon plain documentary evidence, but upon the sour gossip of the time.

It has been said, to his detriment, that Mr Pitt died friendless and alone. This is a gross exaggeration. For his death was sudden. It was only on the 12th of January that he arrived at his house at Putney. Two days later he saw Lord Wellesley, who had just returned from India. It is true that from that time onward no one saw him, except his family and Bishop Tomline. But nine days later he was dead.

“Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet’s silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill.

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood ;
Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way."

It may well be asked, Is any other statesman embalmed as is Mr Pitt in such verse as that from which these lines are taken ?—verse echoed in the hearts of Britons wherever they were found scattered over the world !

The politicians who stood aloof from him in 1804, who possibly neglected him in sickness, nevertheless wept at his death.

Proud and disinterested men, though they receive full measure of admiration and respect, do not often inspire strong affection. It would not be fair if they did so. They would absorb more than their share of earth.

To the world, Mr Pitt's manners were not genial. The mask, which his youth forced him to wear in 1783, became habit, and only rarely was removed. It is doubtful whether even Canning, whom Lord Rosebery says he loved as a son, ever saw him in the mood in which he revealed himself as late in life as 1804 to the young William Napier. Mr Pitt is described as rising from table to meet his young guest, clasping him warmly by both hands ; and, later

on, he and the two young Stanhopes actually engaged in a game of romps, and were about to blacken their host's face with burnt cork, when Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool were announced. They were requested to wait awhile,

"and the great Minister instantly turned to the battle, catching up a cushion and belabouring us with it in glorious fun. We were, however, too many and too strong for him, and after at least ten minutes' fight got him down, and were actually daubing his face, when, with a look of pretended confidence in his powers, he said, 'Stop! This will do; I could easily beat you all, but we must not keep those grandees waiting any longer.' His defeat, however, was palpable, and we were obliged to get a towel and basin of water to wash him clean, before he could receive the grandees. Being thus put in order, the basin was hid behind the sofa, and the two lords were ushered in."

Napier then describes the total change in Mr Pitt's manner; how his tall, ungainly, bony figure seemed to grow to the ceiling, and how, throwing back his head, he spoke without regarding the figures of the men who bent before him. He dismissed them with a stiff inclination of the body, and then, turning to his boyish companions, with a laugh caught up the cushion and renewed the fight. Napier speaks of another occasion when he saw Mr Pitt on the parade-ground of the Horse Guards talking to several

gentlemen, evidently on business. When about forty yards from him Napier caught his eye, and was advancing to greet him, when instantly his countenance changed, with a commanding fierceness of expression, difficult to describe, which emphatically said : “ Pass on ; this is no place for fooling.” This picture of Mr Pitt, so charming and so unexpected, may well be placed alongside of Mr Fox’s game at rounders with Albemarle, then a boy, at St Anne’s Hill ; and Nelson, seated under the dining - room table, playing with young Nisbet.

Still, in the House of Commons, men who knew him described his manner as cold, if not repulsive, never inviting approach or encouraging acquaintance. Smiles were not natural to him, and, though young, and surrounded by admirers and flatterers, he maintained a sullen gravity. Many passages of strong sarcasm—a weapon of which he was master—are recorded in his speeches. But few instances of fine wit have been remembered. It must have thickened as time went on, from the days of the club at the Boar’s Head in East Cheap. But he seems to have condescended occasionally to chaff his colleagues. A story is told of Dundas, who, when being shaved at Edinburgh, suddenly felt the razor drawn across his throat, while the barber rushed from the room, exclaiming, “ Take that, traitor ! ” Dundas put up his hand to feel

for blood, but the crime had been committed with the back of the razor. On his appearance in the Cabinet, after this story had doubtless reached his colleagues, Mr Pitt enquired : "Are you quite sure your head is on your shoulders ?" Otherwise, more jokes were made at Mr Pitt's expense than are attributed to him.

His eloquence, Lord Rosebery observes, must have greatly resembled that with which Mr Gladstone fascinated two generations. Lord Brougham told Bishop Wilberforce that Mr Pitt possessed a power of endless speech, almost too much so ; with the same grandeur on every subject. A description which certainly does not qualify Lord Rosebery's comparison.

Heroes have been said never altogether to satisfy the requirements of their valets, and whosever the fault, there is no doubt that a man appears under quaintly different aspects to his contemporaries. Mr Pitt's old carter, who was still alive at Hollwood in 1862, spoke of his master as "A very nice sort of man, who would do what any one asked him." It may be doubted whether George III. would have altogether endorsed this view. In his dealings with the King the Minister's stiff unbending nature evidently hindered the growth of warm feeling. Lord Beaconsfield thus described to a friend his own method of dealing with the Sovereign : "I never contradict. I never deny.

But I sometimes forget." Mr Pitt's intercourse with George III. was not carried on upon such agreeable terms. And when he resigned office in 1801 the King threw himself into the arms of Addington like an emancipated schoolboy.

Mr Pitt's figure is probably more familiar to Englishmen to-day than it was to his contemporaries. In Hanover Square, in the Cambridge Senate House, in the corridor of the Houses of Parliament, in Westminster Abbey, marble and bronze, noble and dignified, still remind the beholders of the great and disinterested Minister. It is a face and figure which, although, as Lord Rosebery observes, they may lend themselves to chance resemblance and ignoble comparison, once seen are not easily forgotten.

Among the many fine tributes to his memory, Lord Rosebery's henceforth will find a fitting place.

To deny that Mr Pitt made mistakes would be absurd. *On doit des égards aux vivants ; on ne doit, aux morts, que la vérité.* His errors were largely due to the habit which in boyhood he called his "sequestration." Like Pericles he was difficult of access. And aloofness from the rough and tumble of familiar intercourse, although it may enhance personal dignity, deadens that fine instinct in the management of men which is commonly called tact. Lord

Rosebery's fellow-feeling has induced him to lay no stress upon this. He himself as a boy was difficult of access, even to his tutor. So much so that the unusual method had on one occasion to be adopted of tearing over his verses in order to secure his presence in pupil room. It had the desired effect. And to his enquiry of why that indignity had been put upon him, he was told the story of how Absalom burnt Joab's corn when he found that an interview could not be obtained by less drastic means. This earned for Lord Rosebery a nickname, which he bore placidly, as Mr Pitt bore that of the "Counsellor." His political colleagues may perhaps regret the lack of that ready invention which secured a result for which they have often wished in vain.

But it is not from the mistakes and faults of Mr Pitt that lessons may be learnt. Lord Rosebery has judged wisely in laying stress upon his success and his virtues. Errors are the common property of politicians. But Mr Pitt's laborious habits, his noble patriotism, his unflinching courage, the scornful disregard of self, which enabled him to stand, like Palinure, undaunted amid trials and disasters almost beyond human endurance, which permitted him to bear the torch of national freedom aloft until he could pass it to the Duke of Wellington's more fortunate hand,—these are the qualities

from which his successors and his countrymen may learn a lesson. Lord Rosebery has himself clearly learnt it well, and should he be destined to stand among the successors of Mr Pitt, as trustee for the happiness of millions of his fellow-countrymen, it does not appear that he would shrink under the responsibility. May he find himself then among those happy rulers, as Burke called them, who have the secret of possessing unsuspecting confidence.

IX

THE IDEALS OF THE MASSES¹

CARDINAL NEWMAN's death marks our epoch as one blest by wide religious toleration. No party leader as combative in politics as Cardinal Newman was in religion would be likely to receive after death such universal chorus of praise. Cardinal Newman, though he disclaimed the title, was above all things a leader of men. Though his life was the life of a saint, his voice was the voice of a champion. He revelled in polemics, and he excelled in them. For thirteen years no Anglican fought harder and used sharper weapons on behalf of the Anglo-Catholic Church than he. He was imbued with the sense that "opposition to the Church of Rome was part of the theology" of the Church of England, and that "he who could not protest against the Church of Rome was no true divine in the English Church." From this point of view he never wavered. Later on he came to acknowledge that "Protestantism was the dreariest of possible religions; that the thought of the

¹ Written in 1890.

Anglican service made him shiver, and the thought of the Thirty-nine Articles made him shudder." A generation ago the severity of language with which he adorned this theme would have been resented by English clergymen and Anglican congregations. "Lead, kindly Light," would have had no place in Church song. It is a curious example of liberal toleration that the opponent and critic should have been forgotten, and only the poet and saint remembered.

So tolerant are we that it is doubtful whether to-day in England any religious difference of opinion whatever could raise more than a passing gust of popular prejudice. Passion seems to have passed out of the religious atmosphere of the nation. To many who can look back to those years eventful for the Church, when "Froude's Remains" was published, and when Dr Pusey first connected himself with the nameless movement then in full swing, to which he subsequently stood sponsor, the religious flutter caused by Moody and Sankey, or Mr Bradlaugh, or General Booth, appear no more than flashes of sheet lightning. The storm passed away ages ago. Curiously enough, Charles Greville, living in placid circles of racing or political gossip, seems not to have seen the *Tracts for the Times* or heard of their authors. If he did, he thought them ephemeral, and unworthy of notice. But

younger men than he, men young enough to appreciate Tennyson, men who had passed into the universities from public schools, and had issued forth into the world imbued with the influences of Arnold on the one hand, or Dr Newman on the other, in spite of the engrossing political struggles of the day, were, perhaps, more passionately affected by Tract 90 than by any utterance of Cobden or Bright.

Nothing is more certainly true, as Mr Gladstone has pointed out, than "that according to the constitution of the human mind, everything tends towards fixity as life proceeds, and that, upon the whole, each generation of our gentry carry with them to the grave that set of doctrinal and ecclesiastical impressions which they received at the university, without material enlargement or modification."

Consequently, before 1833, the majority of educated Englishmen were content with a sleepy acquiescence in orthodox doctrine of the Georgian divines, administered by orthodox clergy of the good old - fashioned type drawn in masterly fashion by George Eliot in "*Adam Bede*." But when the mystical year 1830, with its sudden upheaval of traditions, political and social, all over Europe had passed away, young men's minds, roused to contemplate drastic changes, turned critically towards the religion of their fathers.

If Puseyism, as it was ultimately called, was the reaction under such leaders as Keble and Newman, partly against "liberalism" and partly against the high-and-dry "country clergy," it was followed by reactions quite as violent against itself. Yet the High Churchmen of forty years ago, undergraduates then, are the High Churchmen of to-day who look uneasily at the generation passing into middle age, and with dread at the younger generation coming to early manhood. If the authors of "*Lux Mundi*" cause trouble within the Church, the men who at Oxford have grown up under the singularly unecclesiastic Master of Balliol, or at Cambridge under the author of "*Ecce Homo*" and Mr Henry Sidgwick, are not likely to "tend towards fixity as life proceeds" in orthodox Anglican doctrine.

For the past fifteen years at Oxford, Canon King, now Bishop of Lincoln, and at Cambridge, Canon Westcott, now Bishop of Durham, have established influence over small knots of young men. But the tone of neither university has been set by them. And if Mr Gladstone is correct in believing that each "generation of our gentry carry with them to the grave that set of doctrinal and ecclesiastical impressions which they received at the university," then it may be safely asserted that among the vast majority of men under forty indifference to doctrinal disputes rather than toleration is the dominant feeling.

Half a century ago, when Cardinal Newman was on his death-bed as an Anglican—for so he expressed it—men disputed religious doctrines, if with bitterness, at least with ardent faith. Pusey, Ward, Williams never doubted in the sense that Arthur Clough doubted then—corrupted, as Dr Arnold thought, by the contagion of Tractarians—and every one doubts now. Anglicans in those days were as positive of their faith as Catholics are certain of theirs in these. Whereas the spirit of doubt, bred of historical criticism applied to religion, of biological science applied to morals, has swept over the Church of England. It has softened her asperities. Prejudice has almost vanished under its breath. Jews, formerly scorned, are regarded with friendliness; Dissenters, formerly hated, with respect; and Catholics, formerly feared, with interest, and in many cases, such as Cardinal Manning and the late Cardinal Newman, with affection.

To what cause is this change due? If Matthew Arnold's vision was clear, the widespread indifference to religious controversy is owing to the decline of middle-class influence in England. In his view middle-class liberalism broke the Oxford movement. For a while its force was irresistible. Then suddenly it was thrust into the second rank, became a power of yesterday, and lost the future. It has received no effectual support from the flower of English

youth educated at the universities. If the new power, the power of the masses, has ideals of its own, those ideals are clearly altogether outside the sphere of religion. The religious complexion of the old popular leaders was never left in doubt. With men of the stamp of Bright or Forster or Shaftesbury, keen politicians as they were, openly avowed religion took precedence of politics. But who knows or enquires into the religious opinions of Mr Burns or Mr Labouchere? Forty years back, confidence would not have been unreservedly bestowed by the middle-class dispensers of power, in some difficult social crisis, upon Cardinal Wiseman or John Stuart Mill. To-day, on the other hand, would not the men who preponderate in governing England, accept unquestioning the advice or decisions of Cardinal Manning or Mr John Morley in matters which most nearly touch their daily lives? During Cardinal Manning's noble efforts to settle the dockers' strike, no question was ever raised by those he was assisting, or by onlookers, as to his authority or position. It is true that to take precedence in charity is one thing, while to receive precedence in rank is a very different thing. What was obviously an act of mere courtesy on the part of the Lord Mayor of London raised protests at once. But from whom? From the masses? It would be interesting to know whether among



the anonymous letter-writers to the *Times* newspaper, many recent graduates of the universities, or representatives of what are called the "masses," could be found. Such a point as "courtly precedence" would excite no jealousy except among middle-class Englishmen, and by the masses it would be altogether ignored. Of course it may be argued that the English orthodoxy has become more tolerant in the highest and most liberal sense; and men, who feel strongly themselves on ritual and dogma, are content to admit that others may hold different views without having deserved excommunication. But is it not more probable that whatever individual opinion may be, public opinion, now representing different orders of men, has grown careless about dogma, and indifferent to ecclesiastical impressions?

Before many years pass away, all doubt upon the point will be set at rest.

In former days, Englishmen who thought about public affairs, whatever their ecclesiastical bias, and whose minds carried beyond their domestic wants, formed or imbibed lofty ideals. The aristocracy, from immemorial times, up to their meridian of power under Mr Pitt, took noble care of individual liberty and of national fame. The middle classes, when their turn came to rule, proved themselves to be animated before all by Christian teaching. Their chosen leaders,

Sir Robert Peel and Mr Gladstone, have gloried in applying Christian ethics to politics, and have even tried to extend them to the domain of everyday international relations.

But what of the masses of the proletariat? Are not their ideals somewhat vague and meagre, and is not religion in a dogmatic sense quite beyond their horizon? Were a true religious census taken in England, what kind of tale would be told? In Canada and Australasia, where it is attempted to ascertain religious figures with accuracy, it is admitted that vast numbers give their nominal allegiance to Churches, to which in no serious sense they belong. Still, if the masses, or working classes, have no religion, have they lofty ideals of state duty or national sacrifice? The great problem of the future, for England and the English race, lies in the answer to the question whether or no the artisans, the labouring classes, will develop an altruistic ideal at all. At present individual effort, among the masses, is limited to some simple domestic aim. A man wishes to improve his own position, or that of his family. Any idea of sacrifice on behalf of a cause, worldly or unworldly, is beyond his imagination. Life to him is too bitter a struggle. This is true of the vast majority of cases. Undoubtedly Idealism, whether knightly, religious, or patriotic, developed slowly among the classes who formerly

ruled England. It was a virtue not inherent in Norman nobles or in British merchants. It was the growth of centuries, fostered by the lessons of poets or preachers, and flourished as the standard of living was generally raised, along with the other standards of morals and ideas. We should not expect to find among the barons who fought at Bosworth or their wives, a man like Colonel Hutchinson and his wife Lucy, who seem to fit in so neatly with the lofty enthusiasms of the Great Rebellion. Again, a real character, although chosen from noble fiction, like Dinah Morris, would seem anachronistic even in the seventeenth century. George Eliot had observed the working classes as she had observed others. Yet in "Silas Marner" there is no idealism beyond the golden-haired Eppie, and Felix Holt was not a genuine workman. More recent writers, notably the author of the "Revolution in Tanner's Lane" have seen glimmerings of the sacred fire in men of the artisan class. Mr Tom Mann, whose name is now familiar to most readers of newspapers, appears to possess in a high degree, whether his aims are ill or well directed, the genuine intellectual enthusiasm and reach of soul which raise high hopes for the future of his order. Doubtless, numerous examples could be discovered, but they would require seeking. Among the prosperous middle classes, the

puritan spirit which is characteristic of them, with its narrowness and nobleness as well, does not require seeking. You feel it in the atmosphere which surrounds them.

At the Trades Union Congress held in Liverpool, where the working classes were represented fully, the discussions, full of interest and eagerness and practical enthusiasm as they were, certainly lacked idealism. No speaker, as speakers were reported, touched a deeper note. It was impossible not to feel the want of orators with the tone of mind which marked Mr Bright and his companions. Mr Carnegie, addressing Scotsmen at Dundee on the merits of republican forms in government, suggested, indeed, ideas to his democratic audience beyond immediate material advantage. His references to universal brotherhood, to a federation of the world, accelerated by the spread of the English-speaking race, seemed to move the pulse of his hearers. Perhaps on the lines of the "International" some creed of "Pax Britannica" might seem to the English people worth all personal sacrifices. To make England inclined, as she once was, "to shrink into her narrow self," in reality the "tutelary angel of the human race," might possibly become an object to Englishmen in a wider sense than Burke ever dreamed. Mr Carnegie lays stress wisely upon the expansion of English blood and

English speech. Federation of these, he thinks, if it ever is accomplished, might make a greater England the arbitress not of Europe only but of the world. She could enjoin disarmament and enforce order. It is certain, and the point might be pressed, that the only common denominator at present between England and the wider England beyond the ocean is that of Labour. If ever a girdle is to be woven round our England and Australasia and Africania and the lost America, it will be by the hands of the working classes. Princes and peers and plutocrats, however willing, are powerless here. Though they have speech in common, the blood is not theirs. The common people of England, as they are sometimes called, may possibly federate the English race. That is an ideal before which all efforts of their predecessors with ruling attributes sink into insignificance. It is an ideal worthy of the dream of a great ruling class, the mightiest of all ruling classes, an educated, self-governing people.

It must, however, not be forgotten that if it is rare to find a man capable of using profitably and nobly great riches, to make profitable or noble use of poverty is rarer still. For this reason the sense of mankind long ago decided that both extremes of wealth and poverty were undesirable in a well-ordered state. Certainly the efforts to obviate them have not hitherto

been happy. The doctrines of a political economy based on that curious type, an individual animated solely by a self-regarding desire to accumulate as much wealth as possible, have singularly failed to do so. In England the rich grow richer, and the poor poorer every day. A new school of economic philosophy condescends to admit that men have other passions besides that for wealth, and other virtues besides that of self-interest. In this admission lies a new-born hope for the future. For the moment you abandon the firm ground that every man is the best judge of his own interest, and that his interest is invariably financial to the exclusion of all other considerations, deduction after deduction may lead you into endless labyrinths of what economists consider false sentiment. Among the many forms of false sentiment very noble ideals find place. It is difficult, for example, to see how any strict economist of the old school could logically approve of Trades Unions or their methods. For a Trades Union is the negation of the principles, "every man for himself," "the supply follows the demand," and of the individual struggle for life. Combination is a plan invented to defeat the Darwinian theory; to minimise the severity of natural laws against the weaker members of society. The sanctions of combination, which give to Trades Unionism

its force, are those practices, said to be illegal, but nevertheless freely used, of boycotting, of picketing, and of intimidation. *À priori* these methods appear dangerous and bad. Are they indispensable? It is ardently asserted that they are used with beneficial results, and only in rare instances misused. No anomaly could be greater, and no breach of apparently essential laws more incongruous. Yet who can doubt that the laws deliberately enacted against these methods have been broken, and that the world in general and England in particular have widely benefited in consequence? English policy is indeed reared on paradox. Laws are enacted, are broken, and society seems none the worse, but all the better. No doubt some of the means employed are rough. Strikes are but a coarse way of adjusting legitimate disputes between employer and employed. Yet the moment that any proposal is made with the intention of minimising the suffering inevitable from coarse methods of the kind, the parrot cry of "socialism" is raised, and no arguments however quietly urged will receive attention. Yet it may be that from combinations such as these, from the effort to effect them, and utilise them, there will spring the new Ideal for which we are seeking. The people, half educated, are anxious for guidance. They are bewildered by noisy agitators for and against

their well-being. At present they look in vain for high leadership.

From the Church of England they receive little attention or assistance. Frederick Maurice forty years ago, Mr Stubbs quite recently, are names of notable Churchmen who were yet something more to the labouring masses. But the archbishops and bishops, with the exception of the late Bishop of Durham, seem to stand loftily aloof from the turbulent swaying crowd of their fellow-countrymen. Among Christian ecclesiastics Cardinal Manning alone has stepped down from his archiepiscopal throne and stood face to face with the people. And of prominent politicians who, except Mr John Morley, has ventured to speak freely and openly to them on the topics which fill their daily thoughts? All respect and admiration is due to him for his boldness in holding to old doctrines which are unpopular and discredited. No greater service, except his conversion to the opposite views, could be rendered to the working classes than Mr John Morley is rendering to them by opposing the demand for legislative interference with the hours of labour. It is a disputable question, upon which thoughtful and practical men strongly differ. It involves a departure in legislation full of grave results to commercial interests. It requires thorough discussion. Mr John Morley's opposition ensures

this. If he is defeated in debate and worsted in the struggle, as he probably will be, the working classes will owe him no grudge. For if they can triumph over him, they may be doubly reliant on the strength and justice of their cause. Mr John Morley has only their interest in view. His opinion as to what constitutes their interest differs from that of the advocates of a short labour day.

But where are the other professed leaders of the people? What are they waiting for? It is not, as many of them seem to think, a question of what the majority of the working classes want. The question is whether what the working classes want is really for their good. The working classes are eminently reasonable. They are prepared to yield to argument, and to be convinced. They look for leadership, but it is strangely long in manifesting itself. As Edmund Burke educated the nation in Liberal principles, as Mr Disraeli educated his party in tactics, as Mr Gladstone educated his in policy, so the masses to-day await the teaching of experienced and honest statesmanship on the unsettled questions to which they have recently awokened.

It is high time that others beside Mr John Morley stepped into the arena. Ireland is no doubt an absorbing topic. It is the favourite battle-ground of party fighters. The claims of

Irishmen, too, are irresistibly strong for priority of treatment. But to the most careless observer it is clear that other matters besides Ireland are disturbing the surface of English life; and that moral forces recently called into active existence are beginning to make themselves felt. The social relations of classes to each other, of labour to capital, of man to woman, of both to the state, are all destined to be tested by the new state power just feeling its strength. Is it not of vital importance to us that the guidance of this new state power should be in good hands? That is to say, in the hands of men themselves actuated by deep and enduring principles, and prepared to use their influence with a view to their primary enforcement.

Material improvement, betterment of social conditions, more equal distribution of wealth, all these are aims excellent in themselves. But these objects as they present themselves in a practical shape to men, can scarcely be attained, should they make any demand upon personal sacrifice, unless behind the effort to achieve them lies some strong unselfish motive power. That seems to be a fair inference from the story of the past. In former struggles Englishmen have keenly felt this stronger motive. It has been relied upon by statesmen of old to obtain the consent of their countrymen to great sacrifices.

If Burke's appeal to the national love of liberty

was necessary to carry through the great war against Napoleon; if Wilberforce would have had a poor chance of abolishing slavery had he not felt himself and known how to awake in others the love of abstract justice; and finally if Mr Gladstone, by applying Christian morality to international quarrels, was able to avert a fratricidal war with America, which under the aristocratic government of forty years before could not have been prevented; then surely at the present time no question is more full of grave import for the future than to determine what are the deeper motives in the working classes to which an appeal can be made, and to find leaders willing and competent to make it.

X

A LOST LEADER¹

“WITH malice towards none, with charity to all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.”

These words are quoted from an address of Lincoln’s by Mr Motley in a letter to the Duchess of Argyll. They should be his epitaph, says Mr Motley, and goes on to ask who in the long roll of the world’s rulers have deserved a nobler one.

Enthusiasm and reverence, if a leader would be powerful, are the sentiments his character should inspire. Determination, skill, courage, are qualities which appeal to the reason of mankind. But men are not led by reason alone. If what Spinoza said of laws be true—that those are strong which appeal to reason, but those are impregnable which compel the assent both of reason and the common affections—the observation applies with greater force to the law-maker, and to the leader.

For years after his death, the men who had

¹ Written in 1891.

followed him through the stormy years of strife could scarcely bear to hear Lincoln's name spoken. It is the quality of soul that is able to stir strong feelings of this kind which those with a hard fight before them seek in their leader, if they be wise. In England, at the present time, of how many who lead or aspire to lead their fellow-countrymen in the turmoil of political warfare could the words Mr Motley quoted be truthfully written ?

Yet loftiness of character carries as great an influence with the English people now as at any time in our history, while any conspicuous want of it is fatal to leadership. In aristocratic forms of government intellect takes precedence of character. Aristocracies are perhaps not the keenest judges of what is called a good character. But the English democracy of to-day seems for the present inclined to accept the high standard required by their predecessors who occupied the interregnum between the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 and that of 1867.

The interweaving of morality with national politics has been a task congenial to the nature of Mr Gladstone, and under his guidance the English - speaking races have made marked progress towards a higher civilisation.

But of late a disposition has shown itself among certain classes to insist upon closely connecting private morals with the political

effectiveness. Qualified, and with reservation, the sentiment is wholesome enough. But, pushed remorselessly to its logical conclusion, grave dangers hover round it, which must be clear to any reflective mind. In view of events, quite recent, the results of which no man can foresee, either in their direct or indirect aspects, some of these dangers and difficulties are worth consideration.

A man of Napoleonic daring, of immense resource, a tried and tested leader not only of a party, but of a nation, is ruined and his power destroyed by an offence against public morals. Had he broken the criminal law, the gravity of the crime, and its place in the scale of crime, could have been better estimated. Judges—who fix punishments—are trained to the task, and perform it on the whole equitably. But there are offences which are not offences against the criminal law of the country. On the contrary. By the Divorce Act, adultery, which formerly stood on the borderland of crime, was by the voice of the English people placed among ordinary breaches of civil contract, for which by a civil action at law the aggrieved party could obtain relief and damages. Adultery, in short, was legalised by Act of Parliament. The Parliament which enacted that law has much to answer for. The change marked indelibly, and in doing so may have given an impulse to

the decline of orderly and decent family life in England. The old idea was that “*Nuptiæ sunt conjunctio maris et feminæ, et consortium omnis vitæ, divini et humani juris communicatio.*” But by the Law of Divorce marriage no longer was “a life-long fellowship of all divine and human rights.” It became a mere partnership—not, it is true, co-equal in all respects—and treated as the years rolled on with greater and greater levity. There was a period in Rome, Mr Lecky says, during which law and public opinion combined in making matrimonial purity most strict. For five hundred and twenty years there was no such thing as a divorce in Rome. But as Rome declined morals declined, and divorce became so common that St Jerome had heard of a wife who was married to her twenty-third husband, she being his twenty-fifth wife. There were, however, what some would consider compensations; for women, from being submissive wives, had assumed a position of equality with men, and great independence of opinion and manners. One of the loftiest of modern ideals is the “emancipation” of women. Free divorce lurks behind. Every one knows that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu for years advocated a Bill to assimilate marriage to a lease of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, in spite of the reminder that in all such leases it is usual to insert a covenant to keep and leave in good repair. But

the present law of divorce is so unfair as between rich and poor that, the principle once admitted, greater facilities cannot fail in common justice to be given, and a day will come when emancipated woman will bring free divorce in her train, if she still wear one. As yet, however, divorce carries with it shame ; and the seventh commandment, Lord Salisbury remarks, has, in the eyes of platform moralists, eaten up all the others. If injustice is sometimes done, it is of the rough-and-ready sort, because discrimination by the public between cases of adultery is too difficult. The sentence is a “ decree nisi,” granted without reference to extenuating circumstances. Any man who aspires to influence his fellowmen must take this risk into account—that, more than ever before, the house he inhabits and those he frequents are made of transparent glass. In earlier times a prominent politician, given that society approved his private acts, had nothing to fear on the score of morals from public criticism. Society, in the sense of people who went to Court, drew a clear and well-defined line between public actions and private vices, always providing that those vices were not unfashionable. The public followed suit. Private vices were ignored, but political immorality was not readily forgiven. George III. drank water, but his people were as coldly indifferent to the fact (which in these days would possibly have counted as a set-off

to his hatred of reform) as they were to the drunkenness of the King's Ministers. Had Mr Pitt consumed even more port than he did, his policy would not have been any less popular; while, had Mr Fox had all the moral qualities which distinguished Sir Robert Peel, his reputation could never have survived the turpitude of the Coalition. The monarchy scarcely bent under the weight of George IV.'s private vices and his treatment of Mrs Fitzherbert; but had his successor not yielded to the pressure of Lord Grey in 1832, William IV. might have ended his days at St Germain.

When Lord Melbourne was acquitted, after a trial in which the Tories said it had only been proved that he had had more opportunities than any man ever had before and had failed to avail himself of them, it was known that, had the verdict been the other way, he would have resigned his office of Prime Minister. But he was a sensitive man, and probably an innocent one. There is no proof or suggestion that his resignation would have been forced upon him by the circumstances of the case. The Duke of Wellington and Mr Greville were both of opinion that it would not. On the other hand, this same Minister was enabled to discard the services of the most trenchant Radical intellect in England at the time—to omit Lord Brougham, against whose private character nothing could be charged,

from his Cabinet—without any better reason than he himself gave in replying to a speech of extraordinary power from the ex-Chancellor. “ My lords,” he said, “ your lordships have heard the powerful speech of the noble and learned lord, one of the most powerful ever delivered in this House, and I leave your lordships to consider what must be the strength and nature of the objections which prevent any government from availing themselves of the services of such a man.”

But with the reign of Queen Victoria came a change. At first owing to her extreme youth, and afterwards owing to the nobleness of character so marked in the Prince Consort and herself, the tone of the Court gave to society a different fashion in morals. Of late years, the seclusion of the Queen, added to other circumstances which are patent enough, has caused fashionable ethics to lapse from the high standard of forty years ago. But society is no longer the arbiter of morals in politics. A new force has gathered strength—the force of the people’s opinion. It might have been doubted by cavillers at democracy, having the French Revolution in mind, in what direction that force would be directed. Any doubt upon the matter has been set at rest by the events of the last twenty years. The ethical standard which finds favour with the people, both in regard to public and private

actions, bears very favourable comparison with that of the oligarchy with whom formerly the choice between one politician and another rested.

It is difficult, without giving just ground for offence, to make this clear by example. But there is no harm in pointing to the statesmen who, since the Reform Bill of 1867 — since political power became vested in what are called the masses — have held the office of Prime Minister. Lord Beaconsfield was neither a gambler, a drunkard, nor a rake; while Mr Gladstone and Lord Salisbury are both men, either of whom, so far as private morals are concerned, is qualified to be an archbishop. Indeed, it may be truthfully said that they both possess special aptitude for that sacred office. It would be rash to infer any objective advantage to a nation accruing from the circumstance that its ruler possessed every domestic virtue. The advantage is subjective, and lies in the effect produced upon the people by the contemplation of their ideal, or the non-contemplation of the reverse. For a Minister may be a saint in private life, and yet be cruel and a tyrant. M. Noel, writing of Danton, whom he knew, said, “He is a good son, a good husband, a good father, a good relative, a good friend; and I leave you [his correspondent], who lay so much stress on good morals, to infer the consequences.” Yet Danton, powerful as he was, left much to be

desired in his public capacity. There are examples, and many, some of whom could be named and others in more recent times best left unnamed, whose private vices were notorious, but to whom Englishmen owe it that their liberties have been duly maintained. To assume that domestic virtue is a necessary attribute to beneficent statesmanship is a superstition. It is a belief held on religious or theological grounds, but capable of scientific disproof. But, like some other superstitions, it is ennobling to those who cling to it, and, in certain stages of the world's progress, to destroy it might be fatally mischievous.

Among the Irish saints there was one, St Colman, who possessed a girdle which would only meet round the chaste. To-day, in England, that girdle is labelled "supreme political authority." In Ireland it yet remains to be proved whether the saint's girdle has not lost its virtue.

But whether or no the capacity to make laws and prudently administer them depends upon keeping inviolate the seventh commandment, the English people are inclined to act as if it were so. Whether it is the view of the masses, or whether the masses, having no strong opinion on the point, yield to the pressure of the "non-conformist conscience," may for the present purpose be left unconsidered. The view that

unchastity is a barrier to the exercise of power may be said, by recent clear proofs, to obtain in English politics. Disqualification on this ground not only applies to supreme leadership ; the rule extends to the commanders of co-ordinate forces, to the chiefs of any group of men who aspire to act with the main body of a political party. It may before long be still further extended to individuals. Inquisition may follow, penetrating men's social armour, laying bare their private lives by questions on the hustings, and by attacks on the platform and in the press. Here again injustice, sometimes gross, may be done, for lynch law is the only form in which popular justice can be applied to morals. When their guardianship has passed from an ecclesiastical authority (the Church) to a lay authority (the people), one tyranny in all human probability will have been substituted for another. If the Church treated with undue laxness the vices of one monarch or Minister, the people may treat with undue severity the immoralities of another. It is stepping beyond the region of likelihood to suppose that George IV. and Mr Fox could in our time stand the strain of fortunes lavished in play, of bankruptcy certificated by Parliament, of usury and buffoonery standing where men have been accustomed to look for culture and decorum. Hitherto, in order to weaken a political combination or destroy a

policy, apart from solid convincing argument, it was necessary to expose dishonest motive or corrupt method. But in future there will be strong temptation to use different weapons. After Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons in 1769 he became the hero of the people, the incarnation of the great principle that a constituency was free to choose its representative and to be represented by the man of its choice, without veto from other constituencies and other representatives. His infamous character and notorious profligacy were ignored by his admirers. In these days there is no reason to suppose that this luminous principle would have obscured from vision the character of the man ; and a modern Wilkes, whatever he might represent, would stand no better chance than an Irish politician, whom it is unjust to name in the same sentence with him, stands to-day. It would be useless to argue for a Wilkes on the ground of principle, against a powerful opponent like the *Times*, bent on destroying the man, and calmly ignoring everything but his vices.

A modern politician must be careful of his environment ; like humbler mortals, he is necessarily a slave to it. If the tone of society under George III. in which politicians moved was loose, they ran no risks beyond their purses and their health. But to-day the fierce light of the "nonconformist conscience" has

begun to play upon politicians, their pleasures, and the company they keep. "The ladies," said Horace Walpole, "game too deep for me ;" and it has been said of that period that the eagerness of women in society to win at cards from their friends and acquaintances destroyed all pleasant and rational intercourse in London drawing - rooms. But in those days no one knew or cared whether the loser was the Lord Chancellor or Mr Fox. When the Postmaster-General, Sir Edward Fawkener, had gambled away a large sum at White's Clubhouse, and some one observed, " See how he is robbing the mail !" every one laughed. But would the merri-
ment ring quite so true if the anecdote were told of a Cabinet Minister to-day ? A game of faro could not then destroy a coalition. But to-day it might ruin a party. George Selwyn, when he was told that a waiter at a club had been arrested for some crime, remarked, " What a horrid idea he will give of us to those fellows in Newgate !" He probably did not really care, and it certainly did not matter, what opinion was formed of him and of the set in which he lived, by those " fellows in Newgate," or even by the other fellows who hung about the doors of the House of Commons to pick up scraps of oratory delivered in intervals of the business of dining and of play. But to-day the private habits of politicians are sharpened into weapons

turned against themselves ; and a “ horrid idea ” given of these to those “ fellows ” in the gallery or in the lobbies at Westminster might lead to the wrecking of a Cabinet, possibly of a Constitution.

Mr John Morley, in an essay of daring and profound analytical power, has pointed out that, although selfish oligarchies have not as a rule wanted courage, yet the cowardly French *noblesse* ran from the fury of the Revolution because they were an oligarchy, not of power or duty, but of self-indulgence. But it is also obvious, in retrospect, that the French nobles misread the signs of the times in which they lived, although years before they had been plain to Rousseau in France, and even to Lord Chesterfield in England. “ Blind and obstinate choice of personal gratification ” might have been innocuous in the days of Madame de Pompadour ; persistence in that choice thirty years later was not merely dangerous, but fatal. When levity of demeanour, even of the highest lady in France, broke out in incredible dissipations, in indiscreet visits, in midnight parades and mystification, and above all in insensate gambling, it was felt by grave politicians, oligarchs themselves, aware of the danger, that the storm when it broke could not be ridden out. Rank, beauty, or wealth have to pay the penalty of conspicuousness. Every action is known and open to canvass.

To-day, as then, the poor are very poor, and the toilers have to toil hard. It may not be true, but it is believed now, as then, that the gaming-tables of the rich are replenished by the hapless drudgery and the painfully hoarded rental of the poor. Party men and politicians should be careful not to misspell — like the *noblesse* of France — the signs of the times in which they live.

Quite recently, to an Irish audience, it was asserted by their late leader that he owed his present position to a notorious evening journalist and Mr Michael Davitt. What he meant was that he had been overthrown by the spirit of fanaticism which the former seems to have power to rouse. A terrible and furious passion for chastity, overwhelming all considerations of justice and expediency, which can thus be wielded by the pen of one man and flung against an individual to-day or a class to-morrow, might, if society survived, leave a fearful wreckage behind. The “nonconformist conscience” may be ridiculed, but it is not narrower than was the conscience of Robespierre. It is, perhaps, not perfectly sane. It may be repellent to many of us. There is no one, as Mr Morley once feelingly observed, in all the world with whom it is so difficult to sympathise as with the narrower fanatics of our own political faith. And the “nonconformist conscience,” finding expression

in the daily newspaper in these days of universal education, is a force to which the improvisations of Camile Desmoulins from a chair in a public garden are child's play. The power of the press is only as yet half-fledged. If Benjamin Constant could hold that the press is the mistress of intelligence, and intelligence is the mistress of the world, what would he say of the newspapers to-day ? Their capacity to influence has grown with the capacity of the people to read them. It is far truer than when Balzac said it, that the press is *le peuple en folio*. Mr Labouchere represents, very brilliantly, a certain school of journalism. If what the theatre was to the limited Athenian commonwealth the press is to England, then Mr Labouchere is able to scourge as he often does with as great justice and humour, with deadlier effect, than Aristophanes. It so happens that Mr Labouchere does not share the views of the Greek satirist in politics. But his methods are not dissimilar ; and it is not inconceivable that he should ally himself, with all the fervour of scepticism, to the "nonconformist conscience" in a crusade against vice, which happened to coincide with political opinion, which he honestly thought baneful to his country. Greville had no doubt that political motive was the influence which made Lord Melbourne a defendant in an action for *crim. con.* "Old Wynford was at the

bottom of it all, and persuaded Lord Grantley to urge it on for mere political purposes." The case was notoriously weak, and ought never to have been brought into court. But political venom was stronger than legal scruples. And if men in the position of Lords Wynford and Grantley, more than half a century ago, at a time when political passions were certainly not stronger than now, could sanction such methods of destroying a political adversary, what is to be expected of journalists, demagogues, place-hunters, impecunious Tadpoles and Tapers of every degree, banded together by common hatred of their political opponents, unrestrained by moral or social checks, confident that they have only to appeal to the "nonconformist conscience" and to the virtuous independence of the before-mentioned evening journalist— independence beyond all question—to be sure of hearty response?

In discussing a matter of this kind it is difficult not to think foolishly, as Dr Johnson used to say, and to clear the mind of cant. It is extremely hard to weigh carefully the obvious practical drawbacks against the possible moral gain.

Ask the first three men you meet on what ground they condemn the fallen Irish leader, and they will give you, in all probability, three different reasons. One will say that it was

because reliance may no longer be placed upon his word or his good faith.

“I waive the quantum o’ the sin,
The hazard of concealing ;
But oh ! it hardens a’ within
And petrifies the feeling.”

Another will say it is because of the breach of the seventh commandment, the enforcing of which is essential in the interests of family life and vital in the interests of society. The third, if he is a Nonconformist, and candid, will admit that his mind is influenced by St Paul’s clear precept to the Corinthians, that they were “not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator.” “I wrote unto you in an epistle,” St Paul reiterates, “not to company with fornicators.”

Mr Frederic Harrison’s position is different again ; and no one can refuse assent to the propositions he has so clearly laid down. Comte’s system, it is well known, rested upon the subordination of politics to morality, inasmuch as spiritual reconstruction of society was the starting-point from which he looked forward to regenerate political institutions. Mr Frederic Harrison not unnaturally fails to see any spiritual side to the ludicrous and sordid details proved in the divorce court.

Suppose the evils which appeal so strongly to men of such different castes of thought are

admitted to the full, even then it is open to doubt whether the evil of the punishment does not exceed the evil of the offence. It is an old belief that, if that be so, the suffering ultimately reaped will exceed the suffering prevented, and that exemption from a lesser evil will only be purchased at the expense of a greater.

In one of Mr Herbert Spencer's works he quotes a dialogue between Mr Palgrave, travelling in Arabia, and a Wahhabee, which runs somewhat after this fashion :

“The greatest of sins is to worship a creature of clay.”

“Doubtless,” said I ; “but what, then, is the second ?”

“To drink the shameful (that is, to smoke tobacco),” he replied.

“But what of murder, adultery, and bearing false witness against thy neighbour ?”

“God is very merciful,” said my friend, meaning that these are little sins.

“Two sins alone are not to be forgiven—polytheism and smoking ?” I questioned ; and the sheikh, with due solemnity, replied that this was so.

Perhaps no better example could be found of the labyrinths into which men wander when they attempt to substitute ecclesiastical formulæ for the common law of the land.

That ecclesiastical formulæ may properly govern social rules of conduct is a different contention altogether. To exclude a man from

associating himself with you on behalf of a public enterprise because he smokes tobacco is one thing. To exclude him from your private dwelling is a totally different thing.

The most ardent partisan can draw a distinction between what schoolboys call “sending to Coventry”—that is, moral reprehension—and what Irishmen call “boycotting”—that is, social ostracism. Sir Charles Russell could discern no difference in principle between them. That may be so. But he would not have asserted that there was no difference in degree. And difference in degree is the essence of the matter. An attempt was made to exclude Mr Bradlaugh from Parliament and public life, in the teeth of his constituents, because his theological views and his views on the proper interpretation of the marriage service of the Church differed from those of the majority of prosperous, well-to-do Englishmen. Mr Bradlaugh and his constituents—who, fortunately for themselves, or they might have recoiled from the fight, are none of them prosperous or well - to - do — stood firm. The struggle was severe. Passions ran high. The “nonconformist conscience” was much exercised, but fortunately a sound Liberal principle of countervailing strength, because well established by tradition, was too powerful for bigotry and partisanship: Mr Bradlaugh became a member of the House of Commons. His success was

accompanied by reaction so violent, that not only has Malthusian Atheism been received in the House of Commons with more than civility, but it has been welcomed on Nonconformist platforms—notably and recently at Sheffield—with enthusiasm second only to that reserved for the leaders of the Liberal party. Reaction is the vengeance of Nature upon those who do violence to her. And when rational moral reprehension for breaches of moral laws tends to degenerate into grotesque persecution the moment for reaction is dangerously near at hand.

But it is thought that distinctions can be drawn between delinquents, and that while this man is declared impossible as an ally or confederate another may be tolerated. To differentiate between degrees of moral turpitude may be possible to a confessor, but for the public it would be an idle attempt. Imagine the ennobling charm of a controversy, conducted by rival divines, supported by rival orators and rival newspapers, as to whether or no some particular type of co-respondent was or was not a suitable political ally. To pause a moment will be to conclude that, if the rule is to be enforced at all, its application must be universal. The risks must be faced, the evils encountered.

It has been said of sexual self-control that there is probably no branch of ethics which has

been so largely determined by special dogmatic theology, and there is none which would be so deeply affected by its decay. If beyond the pale of the Catholic Church dogmatic theology with difficulty holds its ground, it may be worth while to endeavour to substitute healthy public opinion for religious anathema as a sanction for morals. Habit founded on reason may be the highest sanction which can be hoped for morals in the future. Morality stimulated and checked by fitful gusts of popular prejudice could not be said to possess any sanction at all.

Let it be assumed that, in view of the decay of dogmatic belief, public opinion requires to be strictly schooled and moral rules severely enforced, and that the voice of the people is to be substituted for priestly excommunication. But a day of temptation must inevitably come. Recently the conflict lay between the supposed interests of the Irish people and the strain upon the "nonconformist conscience." To-morrow, for the first party to that conflict may be substituted the material interests of what are called the "masses," or possibly of the nation. In some European struggle England may have to choose between taking her place alone against a powerful foe and accepting the assistance of an ally led by another Napoleon III., fresh from another *coup d'état* — the good faith exhibited in its accomplishment finding

apologists — and whose decorous life would perhaps receive the approval of Mr Price Hughes. Would morality, guaranteed by public opinion, survive the shock of such a betrayal?

Or, to take another case. Suppose in some prolonged and hard-fought struggle for what are called the rights of labour an alliance between the Liberal party and the party of Mr Davitt is threatened by the private moral delinquency of some leader whose overthrow would imply the disruption of the confederacy and indefinite postponement of its objects: could Mr Davitt rely upon the "masses" to support an act of self-abnegation? And should he fail, again it may be asked, Would morality, resting upon its new sanction, survive the betrayal?

Among the precepts upon which the Liberal party has always placed reliance are to be found the following:

1. You are not warranted in going behind the choice of a constituency to which you do not belong, or of a party of which you are not a member.

2. It is contrary to public interest that any test, religious or moral, should be applied to a duly elected representative of the people.

3. A constituency is the best judge of its own requirements and its own honour, subject

to the law of the land as administered by the judicial authorities. Yet to conspire together to refuse to act with a duly elected member of Parliament, sent up by his constituents to act with you for a common object, is practically to disfranchise the constituency.

In former times, men who, by whatever name they called themselves, stood on the ground which the Liberal party occupies to-day, did not relish the interference of priests in politics. In Italy and in France this feeling is as strong as it was in England under William and Mary. The objection was a practical one, founded on experience. The difficulties of government, of transacting public affairs, were great enough already, and it seemed useless and mischievous to further complicate them. Besides, every political priest, whether he be Cardinal Mazarin or Archbishop Croke or a Mr Price Hughes, smacks of the inquisitor. In the domain of morals, under ecclesiastical rules, inquisition and the confessional and excommunicatory powers may have their uses. In the domain of politics they are out of place.

If it takes a man most of his leisure time in life to look to his own morals, and to see that he not only presents a reputable figure, but endeavours to ensure that his parliamentary representative is of unblemished character, and the party to which he belongs adheres steadily

to the principles they profess, how can he decently undertake the like duties of his neighbours?

"I can say, in the simplicity of my soul, I love not, I love not—I say, I love not to rake into sores, or to discover nakedness." Thus spoke Oliver Cromwell, whose conscience would perhaps stand comparison with that of any of his antitypes. When, on his death-bed, he prayed that his people might be "given consistency of judgment," he must have had prevision of the responsibilities they would some day take upon their shoulders.

The English people have hitherto chosen their leaders well. They can be trusted to choose again without special glorification of individual men and without assistance from the "Vigilance Society." If they can find one "without malice, with charity to all, with firmness in the right as God gives him to see the right"—one who indefatigably "strives on to finish the work he is in"—they select him by an indefinable process to govern in their name. If such a man is not forthcoming, they take him who approximates nearest to this ideal. The process seems to be one of natural selection, and the result will bear careful scrutiny. The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria will favourably compare with the rulers of any European nation over the same period of time. Sufficient to any group

of men is the responsibility for their own leader, and the choice of him. It is a responsibility not lightly to be borne, and no test is too severe which they may apply to determine their choice. But, beyond this limit, prudence without malice, and charitable to boot, will restrain her ardour for virtue.

APPENDIX

NOTES BY COMMISSIONERS

NOTE BY VISCOUNT ESHER

I HAVE signed this Report in which I generally concur, but I desire to add the following observations :—The main defects in the organisation of the War Office, elicited by the evidence, are first, the want of co-ordination between the branches of that Department, and the consequent weakening of the influence of the Secretary of State with his colleagues in the Government; and secondly, the absence of a proper system of inspection, ensuring that the military policy of the Secretary of State, sanctioned by the Cabinet and by the votes of Parliament, is carried into effect.

When the Secretary of State has made unsuccessful attempts, from time to time, to obtain the assent of the Cabinet to expenditure necessary in the interests of the country, his efforts have been weakened by his failure to show a consensus of military opinion in favour, as the First Lord of the Admiralty continually does, of the policy which he recommends.

The condition in 1899, as disclosed in Sir H. Brackenbury's Memorandum, of our Armaments,

of our Fortresses, of the Clothing Department, of the Transport of the Army Medical Corps, of the system of Remounts, shows that either the Secretary of State was culpable of neglect, or that he was in ignorance of the facts.

I

In order to secure co-ordination between the branches of the War Office, and to strengthen thereby the hands of the Secretary of State, the only practical remedy would appear to be the establishment of a Council or Board on the lines of the Admiralty. It is worth while to remark, in this connection, that administration by a "Board" has been found to work successfully in every great commercial enterprise, in the Government of India, at the Admiralty, and—if the Cabinet may not inaptly be designated a Board—in the Government of the Kingdom. Two important underlying causes have contributed to the evolution of this kind of administration. First, that discussion in council is the most successful method of obtaining a right solution of difficult problems; and, secondly, that a collective appeal to external opinion, whether in the shape of the Treasury, or Parliament, or the public, carries more weight than the dictum or arguments of one man, however ingenious and however capable.

The administration of the Admiralty has often been favourably compared with that of the War Department. There cannot well be an inherent superiority in sailors to soldiers as administrators, nor in the choice of First Lords of the Admiralty to Secretaries of State for War. Further, the Board of Admiralty have appealed more success-

fully both to Chancellors of the Exchequer and to Parliament than has the Secretary of State for War, and although this may partly be accounted for by the greater consideration attached, properly, to the needs of the Navy, it is not the sole reason for the greater facility with which that Service has obtained large grants of public funds; for in addition to money voted it has invariably secured a higher degree of public confidence.

In face of these facts it may truthfully be contended that the sound administration of the Admiralty results from the system under which the First Lord determines all naval questions in council with his principal advisers, after formal discussion, and is thus enabled to approach the Treasury, the Cabinet, and Parliament with the force of professional opinion behind him.

The Board of Admiralty is composed of the First Lord, the First and Second Naval Lords, the Third Sea Lord, the Junior Naval Lord, the Civil Lord, the Financial Secretary, and the Under-Secretary of State.

A War Office Council might be constituted to comprise the Secretary of State, the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Director-General of Ordnance, the Director-General of Military Intelligence, the Financial Secretary, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Under-Secretary of State.

The administrative work of the Admiralty is distributed in departments under the control of the members of the Board, and the work of the War Office could be divided in a similar manner. To the Adjutant-General should be assigned the movements of troops, the framing of military regulations affecting discipline, training, military

education, promotion, and appointments. All the subsidiary branches controlling these matters should be subordinate to that officer. The Quartermaster-General should control, with one exception, the spending departments of the Army. The Inspector-General of Fortifications, the Transport, Commissariat, Clothing Departments, the Army Medical Department, should all be subsidiary branches of his Department. The Director-General of Ordnance should be responsible for Armament. The Director-General of Military Intelligence should have no executive functions, and that important officer's duties should be limited to the framing of schemes of defence, the initiation and working out of changes from time to time, as necessity requires, in the organisation of the Army, the preparation of maps, and the collection of military information in all parts of the world.

It may be said that the advice of these officers is at the service of the Secretary of State under the existing system, but more than this is required.

Discussion in the presence of the Secretary of State, if possible agreement, or an acceptance of the decision of a majority, are essential elements in the military administration of the War Office, if the Secretary of State for War's policy is to carry, among his colleagues and in Parliament, the weight which attaches to the views of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

A marked characteristic of the Navy is the loyalty of naval officers to each other, and to their chiefs; while in the Army from the junior ranks upwards, a spirit of criticism has become a military tradition, which is mischievous to the Service, and may take years to eradicate.

In addition to the advantages of administration by Council, already referred to, may be added the probability that agreement, or loyalty to decisions once taken, in the highest places, may gradually tend to produce a similar state of feeling throughout the body of Army officers.

II

It will have been noticed that it is not proposed to include the Commander-in-Chief among those forming the Army Board or Council.

Since the death of the Duke of Wellington the position of the Commander-in-Chief has been gradually becoming more anomalous, until a crisis was reached in the year 1899, upon which it is unnecessary to dilate. The speeches of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley upon their mutual relations in the House of Lords will not readily be forgotten.

The tact of the Duke of Cambridge, and his position as a Member of the Royal House, just rendered possible a system within the War Office which subsequent arrangements have proved to be impossible, if the efficiency of the War Department is ever to be established.

The only practical remedy is the abolition of the office of Commander-in-Chief, as recommended by the Hartington Commission, and the appointment of a General Officer Commanding the Army removed from the War Office into a distinct building, possibly the Horse Guards, with a new definition, by Order in Council, of his duties and responsibilities. He might be entrusted with the discipline of the Army, but his principal functions should be those of an Inspector-General of His Majesty's Forces, and

he should be responsible to the Secretary of State.

His position would be analogous to that of an auditor in the region of finance. He should have to certify annually in writing as to the actual efficiency and condition of whatever military organisation has been settled by the War Department and by Parliament. That is to say, if two Army Corps, or three, or six, are the large units agreed to by Parliament, he should certify annually that they are efficient and complete. Further, he should report and certify as to the condition of fortresses, ordnance, magazines, clothing, stores, equipment, hospitals, etc., and he should be held responsible for the accuracy of his certificates.

Hitherto, the Secretary of State has been forced to rely upon the Chiefs of Departments whose duty it is to organise those Departments for information as to their efficiency, with results at once misleading and dangerous. The object of the change suggested is to give the Secretary of State an Inspecting Officer of the highest rank and military qualifications, whose principal functions would be to keep him informed of the actual condition of an organisation for which that officer was not himself responsible. The importance of such a check or audit cannot well be exaggerated.

One advantage which would accrue to the military organisation of the Army by the abolition of the Commandership-in-Chief should not be overlooked. Under the existing system a soldier appointed to that office, except he has reached the final stages of his career, is practically shelved after a tenure of five years. Re-appointment is a course of procedure undesirable

for many obvious reasons. The Admiralty here again may be taken as a model, for there is no naval command so clearly superior to all others that after his tenure of it an officer need be removed from the active list while still fit for service.

In the Army, on the other hand, were an officer in the prime of life appointed Commander-in-Chief under existing conditions, his further employment would be a matter of considerable difficulty. This is a point worthy of careful consideration.

To summarise, therefore, these recommendations, they are briefly:—

First, to reorganise the War Office Council, and to define more clearly their functions, as an advisory and executive Board, presided over by the Secretary of State, in whom, however, final responsibility to Parliament must be reserved.

Secondly, to decentralise internally the War Department, by a re-arrangement of duties, under the respective members of the Board, abolishing the cross jurisdiction now existing.

Thirdly, to abolish the Commandership-in-Chief, and to appoint a General Officer Commanding the Army, responsible to the Secretary of State for the efficiency of the military forces of the Crown.

With Sir George Taubman-Goldie's Scheme, as explained by him, for National Military Education, I cordially agree, as the only practical alternative to conscription.

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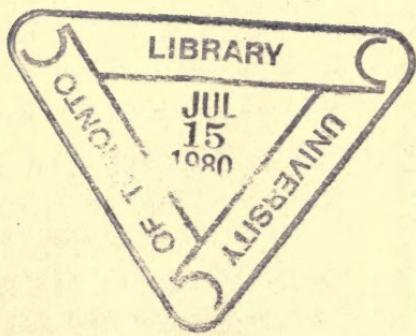
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